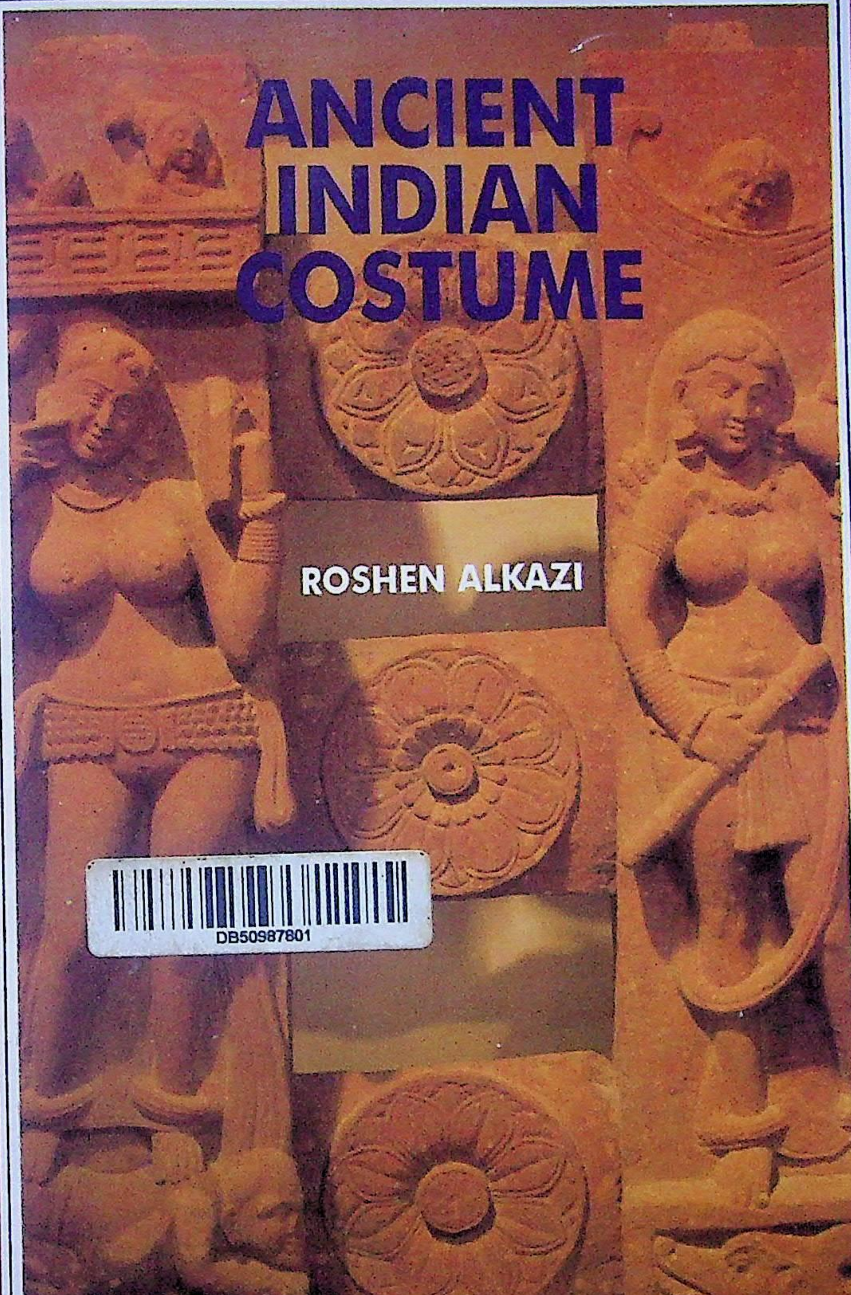
INDIA—THE LAND AND THE PEOPLE

ANCIENT INDIAN COSTUME



ROSHEN ALKAZI

DB50987801

ANCIENT
INDIAN
COSTUME

India—The Land and the People

ANCIENT INDIAN COSTUME

ROSHEN ALKAZI

LIBRARY OF
R.J.M.
REBECCA JANE MANNING

एकः सूते सकलम्

NATIONAL BOOK TRUST, INDIA

This book is an abridged edition of *Ancient Indian Costume* by the same author published by Art Heritage in 1983.

Cover : Detail from Stupa at Sanchi.

This book is printed on eco-friendly recycled paper.

ISBN 81-237-1687-7

1996 (*Saka* 1917)

© Roshen Alkazi, 1993

Rs 45.00

Published by the Director, National Book Trust, India
A-5, Green Park, New Delhi-110 016

This book is dedicated
to the memory of my brother
Sultan Padamsee

Contents

Foreword ix

Preface xi

Mauryan and Sunga Periods (321–72 B.C.) 1

Satavahana (Andhra) Period (200 B.C.–A.D. 250) 23

Kushan Period (130 B.C.–A.D. 185) 57

Gupta Period (Early Fourth to Mid-Eighth Century A.D.) 87

Glossary 131

Bibliography 136

Index 139

Foreword

The simplest and the most sophisticated of attire is in the form of *Ardhanariśvara*, the right half practically unclad or clad in a tiger skin or elephant hide with reptiles as ornaments, but the left half with the most sophisticated of both drapery and ornaments. The mountain princess Parvati decks herself with every possible jewel and has gorgeous costume.

Though originally the idea of costume was only to cover parts of the body, it developed rapidly and nature contributed immensely towards the material sought for costume. Costume is not the same throughout the year. Kalidasa specially mentions how summer came in its rigour to give the beloveds of the prince lessons on the mode of dress, where the upper garments were delicately interwoven with jewels, pearl necklaces pendent on ever so pale breasts and the silken garments so fine that they could be blown away even by the softest breath: *athasya ratnagrathi tottariyam ekantapandustanalambiharam, nissvasaharya mśukam ajagama gharmah priya vesam ivopadeshtum.* ***Raghuvamśa*** **16.43.**

It was not the same in winter, where the prince enjoyed the damsels with lovely waists, who attracted him when he tied and untied and played with the garments on their hip, rustling as silk usually does, and made specially for use in winter and fragrant with the fume of frankincence, displaying their golden waist bands: *marmarair agurudhupagandhibhir vyaktahemarasanais tam ekatah, jahrur agrathanamokshalolupam haimanair nivasaniah sumadhyamah.* ***Raghuvamśa*** **19.41**

This would give an idea that costume in a tropical country like India differed almost every few months. Sunlit, the land is glorious, both jewellery and costume adding beauty to the lovely form, however much Kalidasa may deny in a taunting way "what is not an adornment to beautiful form", *kim iva hi madhuranam mandanam nakritinam*. ***Abhijnanasakuntalam*** **1.18.**

Beautiful form apart, dress was a great factor. Dress distinguished different classes, different trades and vocations, different stages of life and different aspects of the mind. The *brahmachari*, pupil and the *yati* or ascetic were the only ones who were absolutely the simplest, devoid of ornaments and very sparing in dress.

Ancient Indian costume is a great theme. It inspires not only because our literature is rich in its description, but visually also sculptures and paintings have given so much.

Mrs Roshen Alkazi has made a detailed study of ancient Indian costume from the earliest times to the end of the Gupta period. She has ransacked jewels and costumes from one end to the other of our great subcontinent giving a number of sculptures and supplementing them with drawings specially prepared to explain each variety. She has described in detail every sketch that is given and the photographs that illustrate her large and liberally illustrated volume. She has studied the various areas, classified and given maps to show the vast range of the Indian subcontinent. She has patiently worked on this for quite a long time and it is indeed a pleasure to see that she has come to the end of her devoted work to make available her fine book *Ancient Indian Costume* which I am sure will be welcomed by all lovers of Indian culture.

New Delhi
March 30, 1982 C SIVARAMAMURTI

The foreword has been reproduced from the original edition of *Ancient Indian Costume* by the same author.

Preface

Geographical, climatic and racial factors have had a great influence on the history of India, and consequently on the costume of its people. The very shape of India, a suspension from the continent of Asia, sealed by the Himalayas in the north and surrounded by the ocean on its other two sides, isolated it sufficiently for change to come by very slowly. The only entry into India by land was through the various passes of the north-west. Culturally, the divisions in India have been formed by the two great rivers, the Indus and the Ganges, with their tributaries in the fertile north and west. The Deccan plateau in the centre with the Western Ghats and similar ranges on its east coast, uniting at the bottom to form the Nilgiri Hills, sealed off the south of India, thereby allowing it to retain a distinct culture of its own.

This book is a study of the costumes prevalent in four periods—Mauryan–Sunga (321–72 B.C.) Satavahana (200 B.C.–A.D. 250), Kushan (130 B.C.–A.D. 185) and the Gupta period (early fourth–mid-eighth century A.D.) The two main sources from which historical reconstruction of costumes can be made are the literary and archaeological sources. It seems safer to base most of our evidence on archaeological remains, as literary descriptions of clothes can be vague, exaggerated or confusing. Each chapter includes a brief social history of the period, its costumes, headgears and hairstyles, jewellery, and textiles and dyes. Religious and military costumes have also been given some emphasis. As the visual style of the art of each period epitomizes the costume prevailing in that period, a brief note on it has been added.

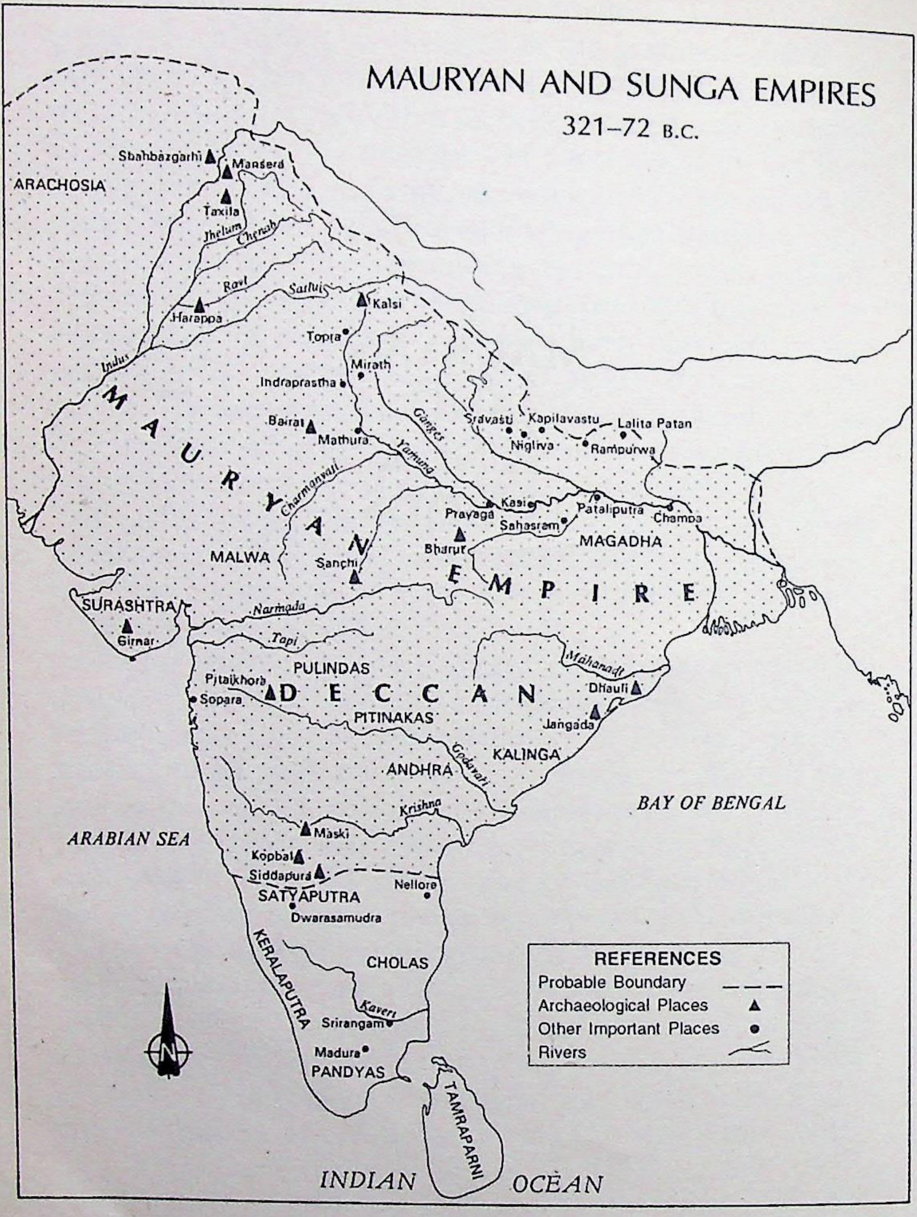
Illustrations have been selected with a view to showing as much variety as possible of the garments worn in each period. This has been done to make a reasonable reconstruction of the clothes as they evolved and changed in ancient India. An attempt has been made in the line drawings to clarify and emphasize the functional aspect of clothes by completing a broken fragment of sculpture or a line in a painting, by eliminating the extraneous, and by disentangling from the welter of sculptural or painted forms the manner in which clothes have been attached to the human body, and the elements of which they are composed. The illustrations are accompanied by brief written descriptions using, as far as possible, the appropriate terminology. Occasionally, English terms such as robe, belt, and tunic which from the strictly academic view may appear anachronistic, have been used for purposes of simplification and clarity and to avoid the sort of pedantry which only confuses the reader.

This work is an effort to provide substantial material for ready reference in a direct simplified form, without the encumbrances of abstruse references or technical jargon. Besides laypersons, for whom this abridged edition is primarily intended, it is hoped that illustrators, art students, fashion designers, and costume designers for film, television and theatre will get an idea of the essentials of the costume of a particular period by referring to this book.

I wish to express my gratitude to all those scholars whose painstaking works have been a source of inspiration to me. My thanks to Shyama Chopra, Uttara Baokar, Neeta Gangopadhya and Rohini Parong for having patiently worked and re-worked on the line drawings over the many years it took to complete the original edition of this book.

MAURYAN AND SUNGA PERIODS

(321–72 B.C.)



MAURYAN AND SUNGA EMPIRES
321–72 B.C.

ARACHOSIA
Shahbazgarhi
Mansera
Taxila
Jhelum
Chenab
Ravi
Satluj
Harappa
Kalsi
Topra
Indus
Mirath
Indraprastha
MAURYAN EMPIRE
Bairat
Mathura
Ganges
Yamuna
Sravasti
Kapilavastu
Lalita Patan
Nigliva
Rampurwa
Charmanwati
Kasi
Prayaga
Pataliputra
Champa
Sahasram
Bharut
MAGADHA
MALWA
Sanchi
SURASHTRA
Girnar
Narmada
Tapi
PULINDAS
Pitalkhora
Sopara
DECCAN
PITINAKAS
Mahanadi
Dhauli
Jangada
KALINGA
Godavari
ANDHRA
Krishna
Maski
ARABIAN SEA
BAY OF BENGAL
Kopbal
Siddapura
Nellore
SATYAPUTRA
Dwarasamudra
KERALAPUTRA
CHOLAS
Kaveri
Srirangam
Madura
PANDYAS
TAMRAPARNI
INDIAN OCEAN
N
REFERENCES
Probable Boundary
Archaeological Places ▲
Other Important Places ●
Rivers

MAURYAN AND SUNGA PERIODS

(321–72 B.C.)

Main archaeological sites of interest for costumes

- Bharut
- Sanchi
- Pitalkhora (Deccan)

History and Social Life

This age witnessed the emergence of India's first great empire. When Alexander entered the Punjab just before the establishment of the Mauryan empire, it was with a view to develop its immense commercial resources. Trade with Babylon had long been established. As such, there were many cultural cross-currents between China, Persia, and India. Alexander founded trading posts all along his course, and left behind Greek colonists who finally intermarried with the Indians. Chandragupta Maurya himself married a princess from the Greek Seleucid court.

Chandragupta Maurya lived in considerable state. In the processions held on festive occasions, elephants decked in gold and silver, four-horsed chariots and yokes of oxen took part. In the towns people dressed in flowered muslins embroidered with jewels. The palaces are said to have been truly luxurious, with great pillared rooms of state, like those in Iran, the golden pillars decorated with embossed vine leaves and silver birds. These palaces were set in lovely parks full of shady trees, many of which had been imported to give variety, and boating as a sport was popular on artifical lakes full of fish.

This was an age of plenty, even for the poor, as the fields were fertile, the basic crops being rice, barley, wheat, millet, and sugarcane. Metals including gold and silver were mined. The state gave the people security and protection, maintained roads, and provided reservoirs and wells. All this helped to create a sense of well-being in the populace. Cattle breeding was as important during the Vedic Age as it is now, and in addition to milk products provided skin, leather, horn, hair and wool which were used in various crafts.

Trade was carried on by ships through the ports along the coastline of Maharashtra, the Malabar coast, the Tamil country, and Bengal. Land routes were expanded to join the Ancient Silk Route through Central Asia to China, and large caravans undertook hazardous journeys for the sake of the profits that were to be made by the adventurous.

Costume

Men and women continued to wear three unstitched garments, as in Vedic times. The main garment was the *antariya* of white cotton, linen or flowered muslin, sometimes embroidered in gold or precious stones. For men, it was an unstitched length of cloth draped around the hips and between the legs in the *kachcha* style, extending from the waist to the calf or ankles or worn even shorter by peasants and commoners. The *antariya* was secured at the waist by a sash or *kayabandh,* often tied in a looped knot at the centre front of the waist. The *kayabandh* could be a simple sash, *vethaka*; one with drum-headed knots at the ends, *muraja*; a very elaborate band of embroidery, flat and ribbon-shaped, *pattika*; or a many-stringed one, *kalabuka*. The third item of clothing called the *uttariya* was another length of material, usually fine cotton, very rarely silk, which was utilized as a long scarf to drape the top half of the body.

The *uttariya* was worn in several ways to suit the comforts of the wearer: very elegantly by those at court, who could drape it on both shoulders or one shoulder, or diagonally across the chest and casually knotted at the waist, or it could even be worn loosely across the back and supported by the elbows or wrist, and in many other ways according to the whims of the wearer. But for the labourer and the craftsman, it was more a practical garment to be tied around the head as protection from the sun, or tightly around the waist leaving the hands free for work, or again as a towel to mop the face when sweating. Its uses were endless for the poor sections of society and for them it would be made of coarse cotton.

Women tied their *antariya* in different ways. Originally opaque, it later became more and more transparent. A simple small *antariya* or strip of cloth, *langoti*, was attached to the *kayabandh* at centre front, and then passed between the legs and tucked in at the back. A longer version of the *antariya* was the knee-length one, being first wrapped around and secured at the waist, the longer end then pleated and tucked in at the front, and the shorter end finally drawn between the legs, *kachcha* style, and tucked in at the waist at the back. Another version, the *lehnga* style, was a length of cloth wrapped around the hips tightly to form a tubular type of skirt. This was not drawn between the legs in the *kachcha* style.

The *uttariyas* of upper-class women were generally of thin material decorated with elaborate borders and quite often worn as a head covering. Their *kayabandhs* were very similar to those of the men. In addition, they sometimes wore a *patka*, a decorative piece of cloth attached to the *kayabandh* in front by tucking in one end at the waist. The *patka* was made from plaited wool or cotton, twisted yarn or leather, and at times, it was also woven.

Although, footwear is often mentioned in Vedic literature there is no sculptural evidence for this period, except in the case of soldiers who wear the Persian boot. It may be because shoes could not be taken inside a stupa or Buddhist temple, that they were not depicted on the sculptures on stupas.

In the more remote villages and jungles, shepherds, hunters and people of similar occupations were mostly aboriginals or belonged to the lowest caste. They generally wore simple unbleached coarse varieties of the cotton *antariya* and turbans, much the same as we find today, and the practice of tattooing was fairly common. The more primitive tribes who lived in the forests wore garments made from grass (*kusa*), skins, and fur.

Headgear and Hairstyles

Women generally covered their heads with the *uttariya*, worn straight or crosswise, often resplendent with beautiful borders. The hair, centrally parted, was made into one or two plaits or in a large knot at the back. The *uttariya* could be worn simply hanging down at the back or secured to the head with a head band, or with one end arranged in a fan at the top of the head. Skull caps were sometimes worn under or over the *uttariya* to keep it in place, or at times it could be decorated with a fringe or pendants. Helmets too are seen as headgear for Phrygian women who probably served in the king's bodyguard. These Amazons wore a long-sleeved tunic with tight-fitting trousers and a Phrygian cap which was conical and had ear flaps. In India, the Amazons wore in addition, the crossed-at-chest belt *vaikaksha*, with metal buckles, shield, and sword. Turbans of decorated cloth were sometimes used by women.

As regards male headgear, in the early Mauryan period there is no trace of the turban *mauli*, but in the Sunga period we find great emphasis on this form of male head-dress. These were remarkable head-dresses in which the hair itself was often twisted into a braid along with the turban cloth. This twisted braid was then arranged to form a protuberance at the front or the side of the head but never at the centre top, as this style could be used only by priests. Over the turban a band was sometimes used to hold it in place. In addition, decorative elements like a jewelled brooch or a *jhalar* (fringe) could be attached to the turban, or one end folded in pleats and tucked in like a fan.

Jewellery

From the sculptures we find there was a richness and profusion in the jewellery worn by both men and women. Earlier, it had a massive quality to it and the workmanship was coarse. A little later, with the Sungas, the jewellery become somewhat refined. In the *Arthashastra* attributed to Kautilya, and in the sculptures of the period we find references which show us that the materials used most frequently were gold and precious stones like corals, rubies, sapphires, agates, and crystals. Pearls too were used and beads of all kinds were plentiful including those made of glass. Certain ornaments were common to both sexes, like earrings, necklaces, armlets, bracelets and embroidered belts. Earrings or *karnika* were of three types—a simple ring or circle called *kundala*, a circular disc earring known as *dehri* and earrings with a flower-like shape known as *karnaphul*.

Necklaces of two kinds were worn. A short one called *kantha* which was broad and flat, usually gold, inlaid with precious stones, and a long one, the *lambanam*. These chain or bead necklaces were sometimes three- to seven-stringed and were named after the number of strings of which they were composed. At the centre of each string of beads was an amulet for warding off evil forces. *Baju band* or armlets of gold or silver beads were worn on the upper arm, and were occasionally studded with precious stones. Bracelets called *kangan*, very often made of square or round beads of gold, and richly embroidered cloth belts completed the male ensemble. Women, in addition, wore girdles called *mekhala*, a hip belt of multi-stringed beads, originally made from the red seed *kaksha* but now made of gold and silver beads, with shapes ranging from round to square and oval. Dancing girls added on to these, chains of gold and silver to which bells were attached. Anklets and thumb and finger rings were worn by all women. The rings were plain and crowded together on the middle joints of the fingers. Anklets were often of gold in this period, though silver was more common. They could be in the form of a simple ring, *kara*, a thick chain, *sankla*, or an ornamental circle with small bells called *ghungru*.

There is no evidence of nose-rings in the period. Forehead ornaments for women were quite common and worn below the parting of the hair and at the centre of the forehead. These consisted of a thin plate of gold or silver stamped in various patterns, as well as a star-shaped *sitara* and *bina*, and a tiny ornament called *bindi*.

The only material evidence we have of a piece of Mauryan jewellery is a single earring found at Taxila dated second century B.C. which is similar to Graeco-Roman and Etruscan jewellery.

Military Costume

Sewn garments which had been used by the Persian soldiers were sometimes utilized for military dress by the Mauryans. This consisted of a sleeved tunic with cross straps across the chest to carry the quiver, and a leather belt with sword. The lower garment was more often the Indian *antariya* rather than the Persian trousers. The headgear was usually the turban or head band, whereas the Persians had worn the pointed cap. This mixture of foreign and indigenous garments is interesting as it shows one of the early phases of evolution in the costumes of Indians. This came about in the colder north, where the Persian garments were more suitable, climatically and functionally, in the case of soldiers. Although, coats of mail are mentioned in the *Arthshastra* there is no visual evidence of it in this period.

Religious Persons

Of the three religions—Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism, it was Hinduism which evolved from early Vedic sources with sacrifice as its main ritual and had as its keepers of religion the Brahmin priests, who belonged to what later came to be the highest category in the caste system as practiced in India. Later in life, a Brahmin man or woman became a *sadhu* or *sanyasin*, seeking detachment.

The Brahmanical *sadhu (sanyasin)* was an ascetic who lived either in a hermitage or visited holy places. He wore a shaped kilt-like garment made of strips sewn together which was tied at the waist with a cord. A short rectangular cloak covered the left shoulder and breast, leaving the right side exposed. The hair and beard were allowed to grow, the former being plaited and arranged in a spiral at the top of the head. He sometimes wore a head-dress in the shape of a cap. Women ascetics too wore this cloak and what appears to be a cap. These garments, often made from leaves or the complete bark of a tree, were tied with a cord. Such a bark garment is still worn by the Kumbipatta sect in Orissa. Skins of antelope and goat called *ajina* were used by anchorites and wild ascetics, *muni*, as a covering for the chest. Men ascetics did not cut their nails, hair and beard and carried their few possessions on a yoke balanced on the shoulders.

Buddhism, founded by Gautam Buddha, b. fifth century B.C., had no caste division. It had a religious order of monks, *bhikshu*, and nuns, *bhikshuni*, who set up monasteries where they studied their religion, later leaving to preach and collect alms.

Buddhist monks normally shaved their heads and beards but kept the head covered with a head-dress. If unshaven, the hair was worn in a knot on top of the head. Lay brothers wore theirs on the right side of the head. Their dress was the common *antariya* with an *uttariya* and a larger *chadder*, all dyed saffron. Buddhist monks, *bhikshu*, had few possessions and their clothes were made of rags patched together and dyed red or yellow. These consisted of a lower garment *antaravasaka*, an upper garment *uttarasanga*, a cloak *samghati*, a waist cloth *kushalaka*, and buckled belt *samakaksika*. Worn-out leather soles strapped to their feet completed their attire. Their possessions consisted of a *patra* or begging bowl, a razor, tweezers for removing hair, clippers for cutting toe and finger nails, an ear pick, a tooth pick, gauze for filtering drinking water, a needle, a walking stick, an umbrella, a fan and a bag of medicines.

The third religion Jainism, was propogated by Mahavira, b. fifth century B.C. and its main doctrine was *ahimsa*, non-violence. Later two sects developed—the sky clad (naked) *Digamber* sect and the white clad *Svetamber* sect. Both had nuns and monks who functioned as missionaries.

In the Jain monastic order, monks and nuns wore a white costume consisting of a robe and cloak. They covered their nose and mouth with a piece of gauze to ensure they would not inhale even the smallest living organism and so cause its death. Their hair and beard were shaven and most lived the life of missionaries continuously travelling on foot to distant places and relying on charity for their food. The Jain ascetics smeared their bodies with mud, took the vow of silence, clothed themselves in skirts made of bark, and carried a stick made of three rods bound together, and an umbrella. They wore a brass ring and brass bangles. Their other possessions included a water jug, clay bowl, pot with a spout, broom, hook, portable stool, rosary, and an alms bowl.

Textiles and Dyes

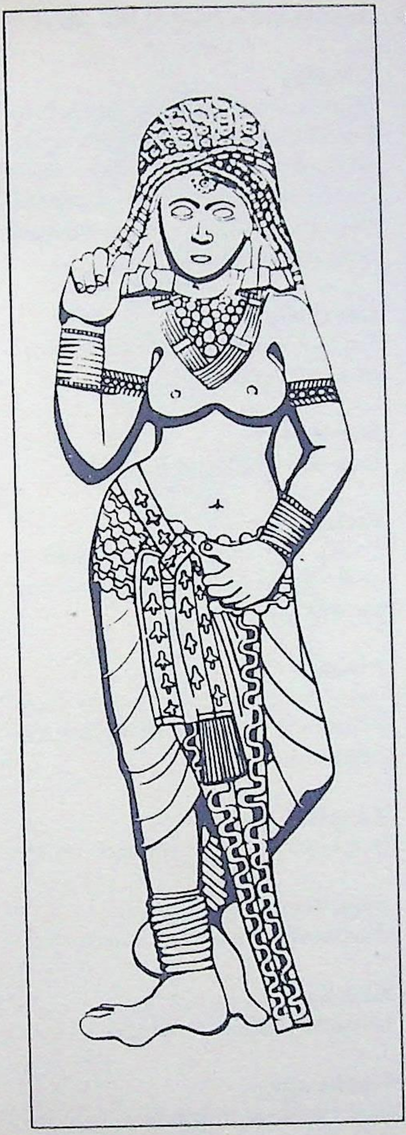
Weaving of fine and coarse varieties of cloth was well-established. Cotton, silk, wool, linen, and jute fabrics were readily available. Furs and the better varieties of wool and silk like *tussar*, called *kausheya* (like the *Eri* or *Muga* silk of Assam), yellowish in its natural state but when bleached called *patrona*, were used. *Kaseyyaka* (high quality cotton or silk) and the bright red woollen blankets of Gandhara were worth a small fortune each. A rain-proof woollen cloth was available in Nepal. Resist dyeing and hand printing in a pattern on cloth has been mentioned by Greek visitors to the court of Chandragupta Maurya, as is the Indian glazed cotton cloth which was in common use by 400 B.C. Material similar to the *khinkhwab* (which is the interweaving of silk and gold or silver wires in beautiful floral patterns) was in great demand and even exported to Babylon long before the Mauryas.

Cotton, wool and a fabric called *karpasa* were available in the north in both coarse and fine varieties. There were also fine muslins often embroidered in purple and gold and transparent like the later-day material which came to be called *shabnam* (morning dew). The coarse varieties were used by the populace. Woollen cloth, *avika*, from sheep's wool was either pure white (bleached) or dyed pure red, rose, or black. Blankets or *kambala* were made either by completing the edges with borders or braids, or woven wool strips were joined together. The process of felting (pressing the fibre together, instead of weaving) was also known. All varieties of wool were available, coarse for making head-dresses, trappings and blankets for the poor and the fine smooth varieties for shawls and blankets for the richer class.

Washermen were also dyers, *rajaka*, and they perfumed garments after washing them. Four primary colours were recognized in the dyeing of textiles: red (dyed with safflower and madder), white (through bleaching), yellow (natural colour of yarn and saffron), and blue (indigo leaves). Fabrics were also woven in patterns and printed for use as carpets, bedcovers, blankets, and clothes.

Style

Forceful sculptures carved during the Mauryan–Sunga period in the first century B.C. in the north at Bharut and Sanchi give us a feeling of superhuman power. The drapery hangs in heavy folds and the jewellery is massive and somewhat coarse. Turbans coil and twist with the hair to form protuberances, with serpentine armlets and anklets closing in on strong limbs. The head veils of the women are voluminous; long-beaded aprons and crossed scarves at the chest suggest fruitful abundance, and necklaces and strings with amulet boxes suspended on the breasts indicate a fear of the evil and dark forces around. With the coming of the Sunga dynasty there is greater emphasis on detail in the elaborate jewellery of the women, which is more elegant and finer and adorns the figures seen in soft relaxed postures.



1. DONOR FIGURE
(Bharut)

Antariya
lower cloth, calf length, of fine cotton with fluted ends in front, worn in *kachcha* style, that is between the legs

Uttariya
upper cloth of printed cotton worn crosswise on the head

Kayabandh
embroidered flat cloth band, *pattika* style, worn in a looped knot with fringed ends

Mekhala
six-stringed hip belt of gold or silver beads

Lambanam
long necklace made of chains held at intervals by flat bands, *phalakahara* style

Kantha
short necklace of five strings of beads in gold or silver

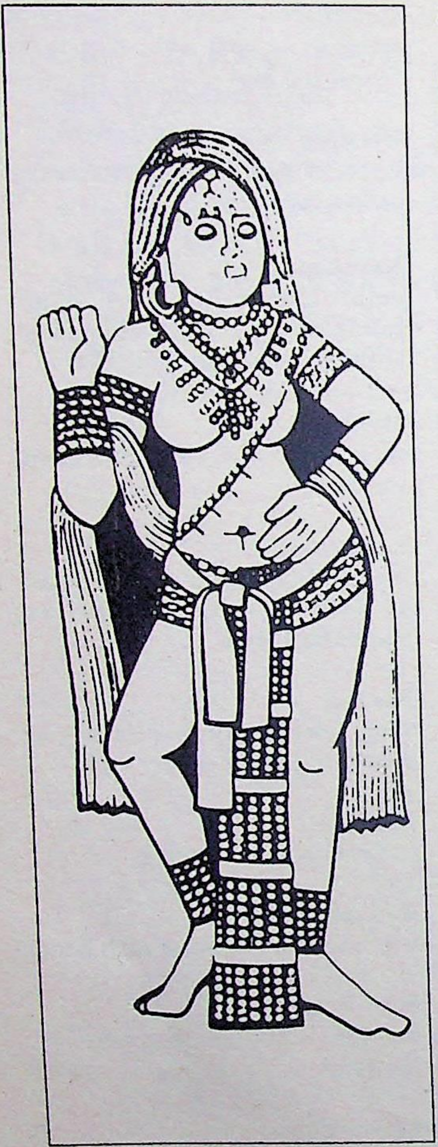
Karnika
trumpet-shaped earrings

Kangan
ten bracelets adorning each hand

Baju Band
decorative armlets worn on upper arms

Kara
anklets of twisted wire worn on both ankles

Sitara
star-shaped forehead ornament of gold or silver with a stamped pattern



2. YAKSHI
(Baranmara)

Antariya
langoti style small strip of cloth drawn between the legs and attached to a cord at the waist

Uttariya
there are two: one has an embroidered border and is worn crosswise over the head with a *jhalar* (network fringe) at the forehead; the other is draped across the back and over both arms

Kayabandh
flat cloth band, *pattika* style, worn in a looped knot

Mekhala
four-stringed bead hip belt

Patka
a strip of woven beads tucked in at the front of the waist reaching the ankles

Atkan
bead necklace worn aslant over the left shoulder and under the right arm

Kangan
five bead bracelets on each wrist

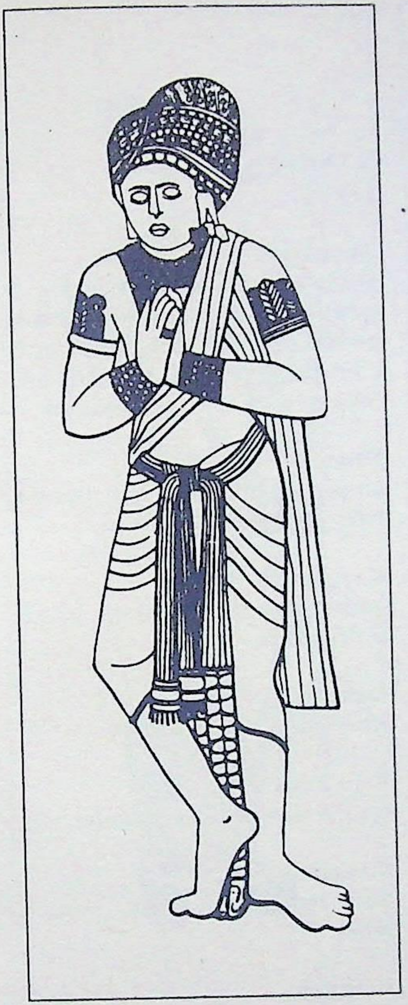
Baju Band
three rows of beads on upper arms

Karnika
trumpet-shaped earrings

Lambanam
long necklace of beads

Kantha
short necklace of beads

Sankla
anklets made of thick chains



3. KUVERA YAKSHA

(*Bharut*)

Antariya
kachcha style, both equal ends being taken between the legs after knotting in front; these ends are then held diagonally, fluted and tucked into the waist at the back to hang between the legs up to the ground

Uttariya
upavita fashion, worn across the chest and over the left shoulder

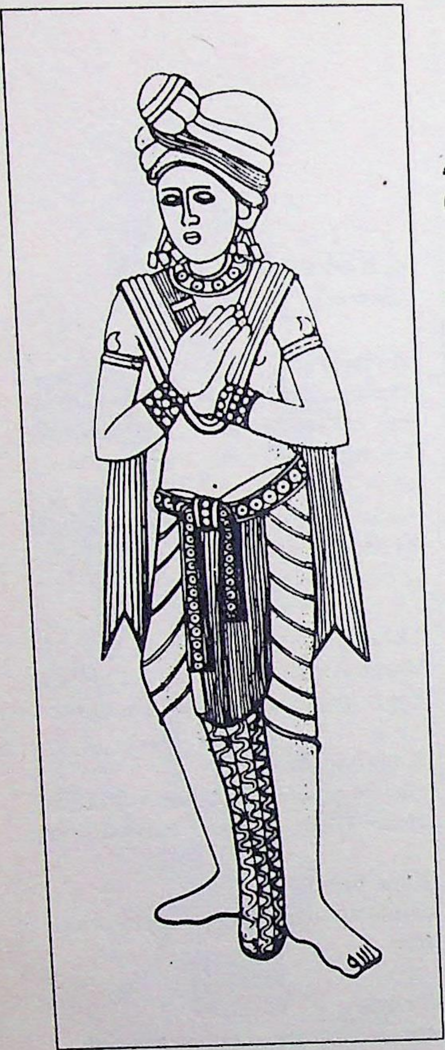
Kayabandh
muraja style, drum-headed knobs at the ends, tied in a looped knot

Baju Band
armlets with elaborate incised pattern

Kangan
several bracelets on each wrist

Karnika
trumpet-shaped earrings or *karnaphul*

Mauli
turban of printed cloth held by decorative bands wound over the top knot of hair and at the side of the head



4. DONOR FIGURE

(*Bharut*)

Antariya
worn in same style as in Fig. 3 except that only one long end is tucked in at the back, the other is a finely pleated apron tucked into the centre front of the *antariya*

Uttariya
looped at the chest and thrown back over both shoulders

Kayabandh
embroidered flat cloth band, *pattika* style

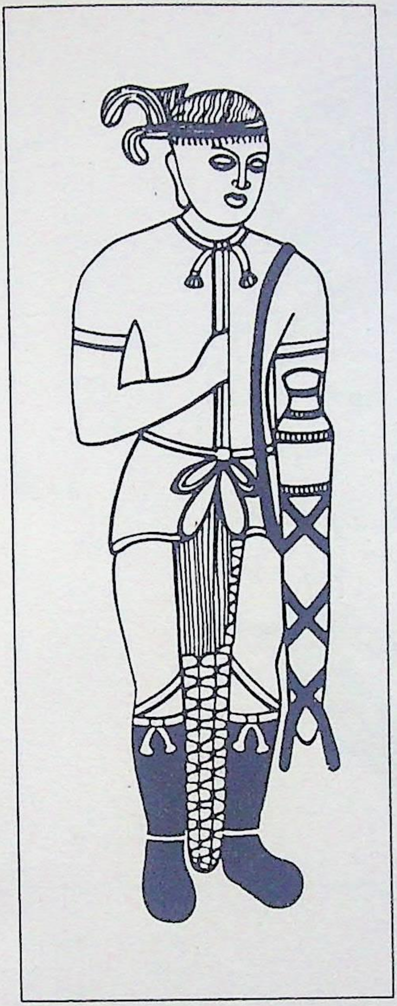
Lambanam
phalakahara style necklace

Baju Band
simple leaf-patterned armlet

Kangan
three bracelets of beads on each wrist

Karnika
trumpet-shaped earrings, *karnaphul*

Mauli
turban in which the long hair and cloth are twisted together, wound around the head and made into a top knot in front, the cloth then continues to be wound around the head and fixed with a separate band



5. WARRIOR
(*Bharut*)

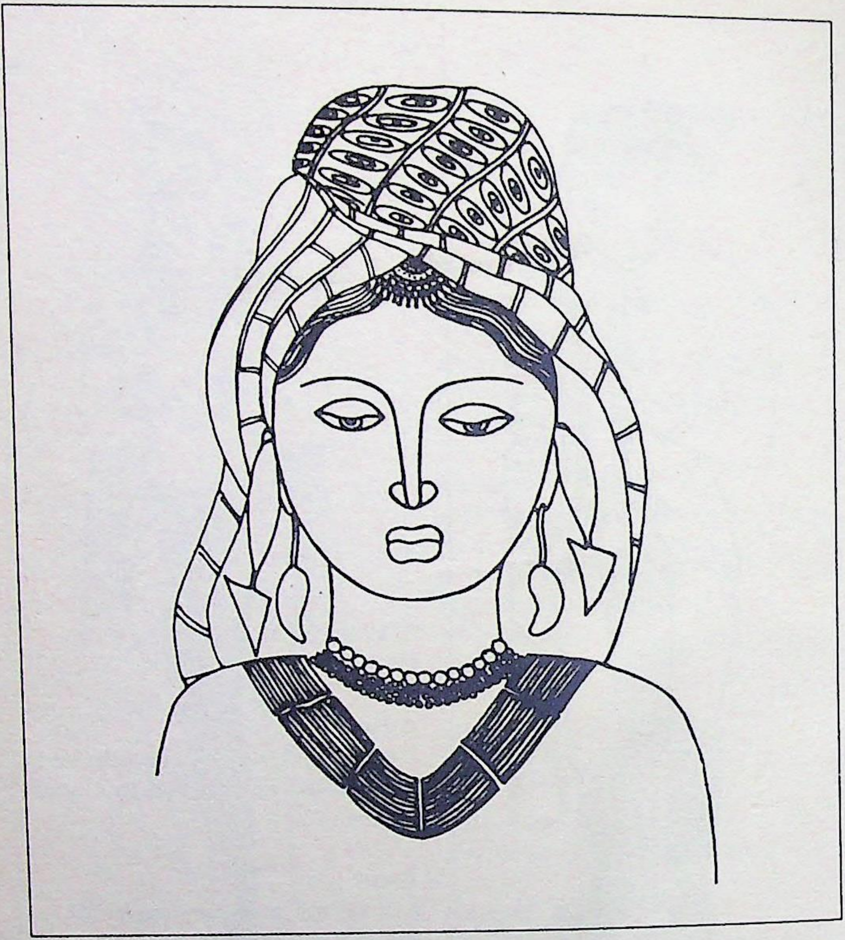
Antariya
knee-length, worn in *kachcha* style with fluted end tucked in at centre front

Tunic
one of the earliest depictions of the cut-and-sewn garment; it has short sleeves and a round neck, full front opening with ties at the neck and waist, and is hip length

Boots
fitting to the knees

Headband
tied at the back over short hair

A broad flat sword with cross straps on the sheath is suspended from the left shoulder.



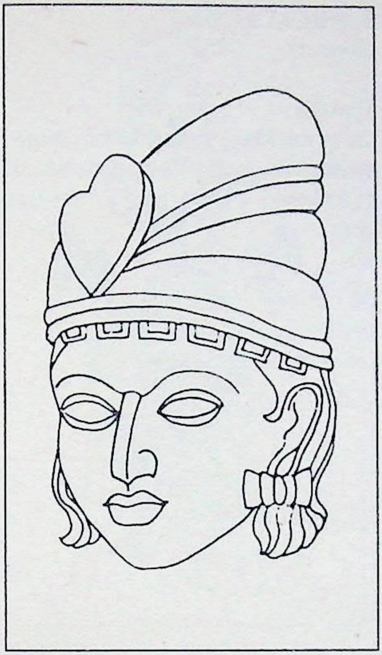
6. DONOR FIGURE
(*Bharut*)

Uttariya
printed or woven in a lozenge design in stripes, with a border; it is worn crosswise on the head and thrown back hanging to the waist like a pouch

Kantha
short necklace with granulated design

Lambanam
in *phalakahara* style

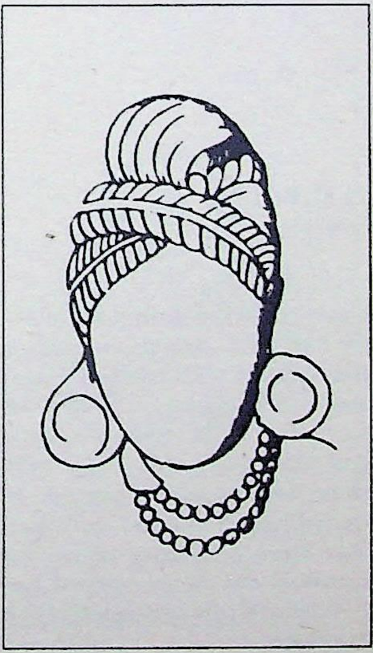
Hair ornament
jewelled and worn below centre parting of the hair



7. COURTIER
(*Bharut*)

long hair is twisted into a top knot at the left around which the turban is wound so as to completely cover it, an ornamental heart-shaped brooch is fixed on the right front and a decorative band visible at the forehead is tied under the turban

↵



8. COURTIER
(*Bharut*)

turban is wound around the long hair tied in a top knot; to fix the turban in place a decorative band has been used; large disc-type earrings and two strings of beads adorn the neck ↳

9. NECKLACE

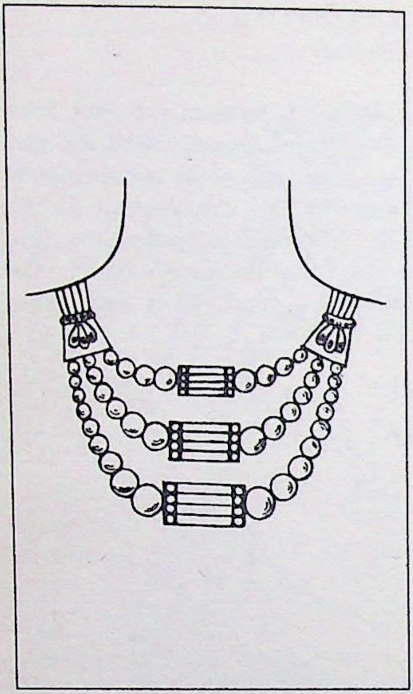
(*Bharut*)

Kantha

short necklace called *tilari* (three-stringed); each string consists of graduated pearls and a central gem

four-stringed: chaulari
five-stringed: paklari
seven-stringed: satlari

←

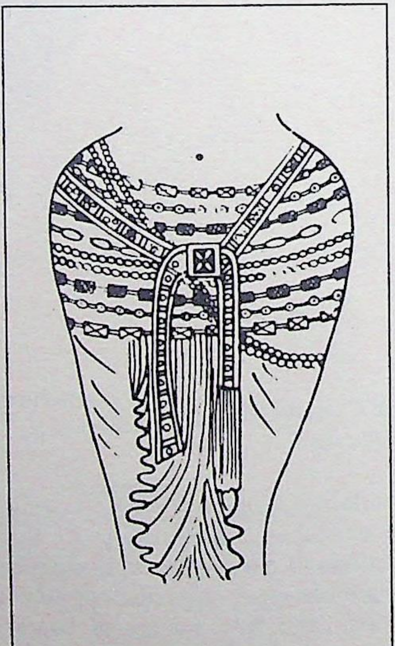


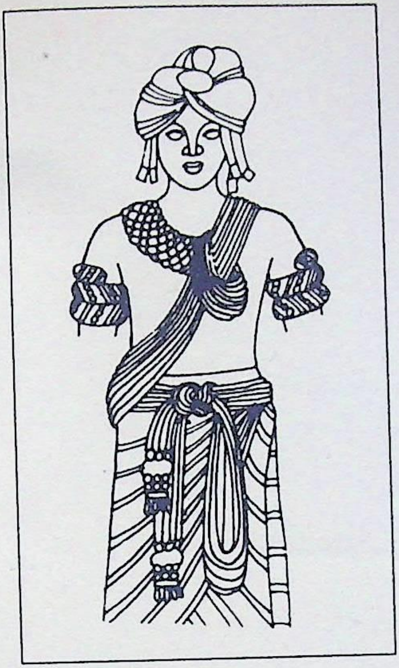
10. GIRDLE

(*Bharut*)

Mekhala

elaborate seven-stringed *saptaki*, the two outer strands are square, interspersed with rows of round and oval inlaid beads; with it are worn two rows of beads across and aslant the hips in gold or hard stone, and are early imitations of the strings of the red *rati* seeds that were originally worn; the *pattika*, a flat ribbon-shaped embroidered girdle of cloth of gold is also worn →



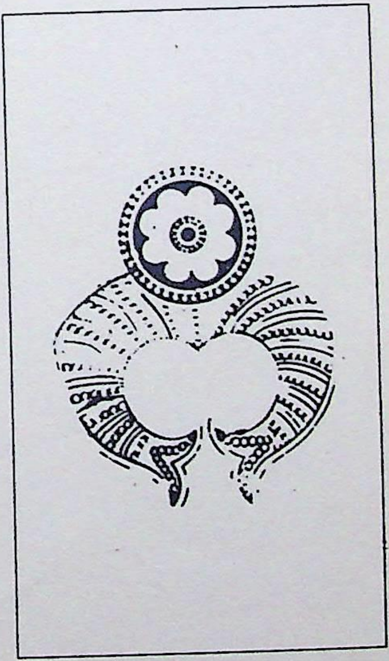


11. ARMLETS

(*Patna*)

serpentine armlets are of the Achaemenid type and depict the Iranian influence on Indian jewellery of this period; he wears an *antariya* in the *lehnga* style, an *uttariya* and a thick many-stringed *kayabandh* with knotted ends—*kalabuka*

↲



12. EARRING

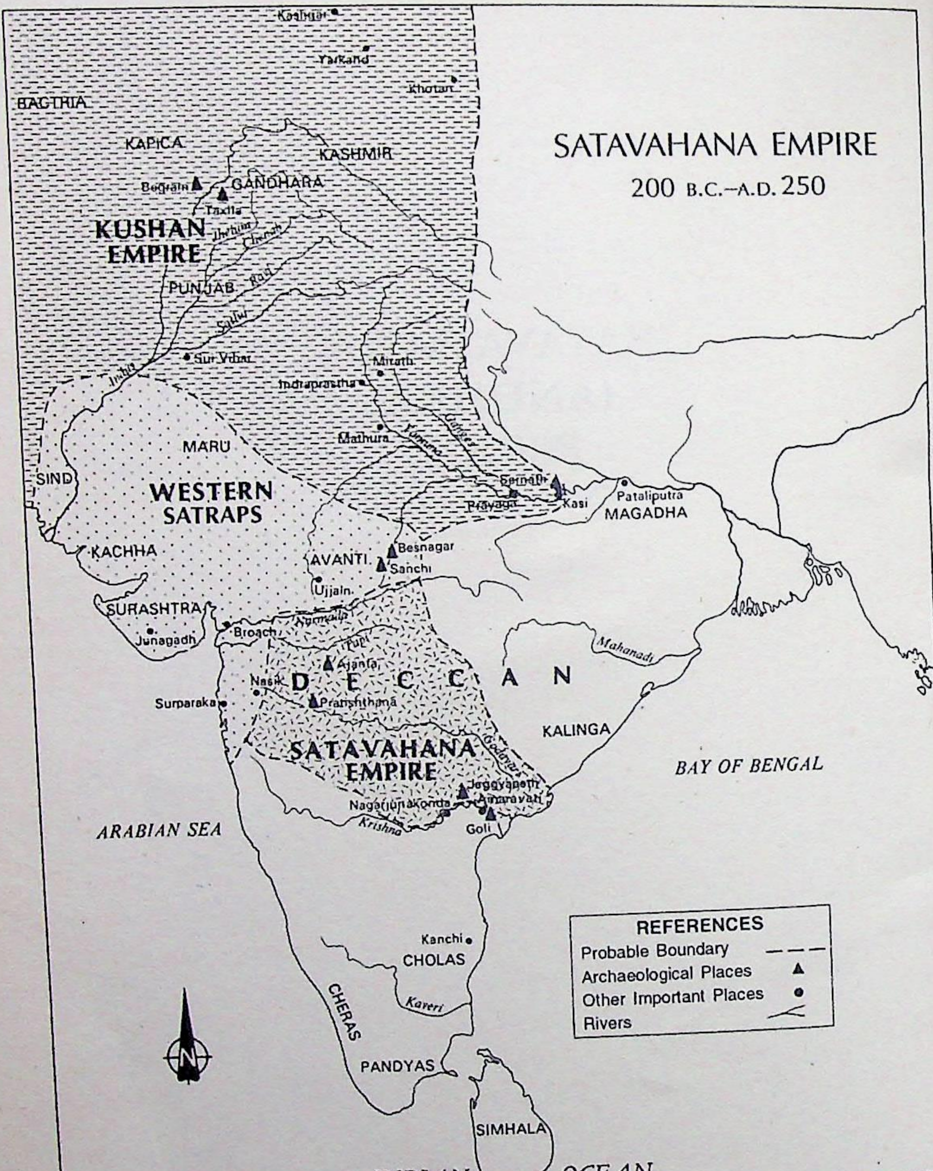
(*Bharut*)

Karnika

this style of earring, in the form of a *triratna* or triple gem of Buddhist triad, was peculiar to the Buddhist; this symbol was used on necklaces and to decorate soldiers, scabbards and the top of standards ↳

SATAVAHANA (ANDHRA) PERIOD

(200 B.C.–A.D. 250)



SATAVAHANA EMPIRE

200 B.C.–A.D. 250

Kashgar
Yarkand
Khotan
BACTRIA
KAPICA
KASHMIR
Begram
GANDHARA
Taxila
KUSHAN EMPIRE
Jhelum
Chenab
Ravi
PUNJAB
Satluj
Sur Vihar
Indus
Mirath
Indraprastha
Mathura
Yamuna
Ganges
MARU
SIND
WESTERN SATRAPS
Sarnath
Prayaga
Kasi
Pataliputra
MAGADHA
KACHHA
AVANTI
Besnagar
Sanchi
Ujjain
SURASHTRA
Junagadh
Broach
Narmada
Tapi
Ajanta
Nasik
D E C C A N
Pratishthana
Surparaka
Mahanadi
KALINGA
SATAVAHANA EMPIRE
Godavari
Jaggayapeta
Nagarjunakonda
Amaravati
Goli
Krishna
BAY OF BENGAL
ARABIAN SEA
Kanchi
CHOLAS
CHERAS
Kaveri
PANDYAS
SIMHALA
INDIAN OCEAN
N
REFERENCES
Probable Boundary
Archaeological Places
Other Important Places
Rivers

SATAVAHANA (ANDHRA) PERIOD

(200 B.C.–A.D. 250)

Main archaeological sites of interest for costumes

- Sanchi Gateways
- Ajanta Caves IX, X
- Amaravati 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th Period
- Goli
- Nagarjunakonda

History and Social Life

The Satavahana or Andhra empire was the next great empire after the Mauryan, and was established in the Deccan just as the Mauryan empire was coming to an end. It endured for 460 years in unbroken continuity and ran parallel, for a while, to the Kushan empire with which it struggled for almost a century. On the whole, it was a peaceful and economically prosperous period and trade and industry increased tremendously, especially with Rome. The Romans brought in a continuous flow of Roman gold which helped to raise the level of economic life and changed the pattern of urban life a great deal.

Racially, the early people of the Deccan were a hybrid race, a mixture of aboriginal Dravidians (or pre-Dravidians) and Scythians (Sakas), Parthians (Pahlavas), and Greeks (Yavanas). Buddhism and Mauryan culture had built up a civilized structure even before the Satavahanas established their empire. In the third century A.D. the Satavahanas were ousted by the Ikshvakus, who were themselves from the Deccan.

The Royal Way of Life

From as early as the Mauryan-Sunga period there were six emblems to denote a royal personage. These were the *ushnisa* or turban, a pair of flywhisks, umbrella, sword, sandals, and the royal standard. Of these, the two most important and almost always used on all formal occasions were the umbrella and the flywhisks. The umbrella was white and gold for kings and nobles, and was carried by the *chattradhara* or umbrella carrier. The flywhisks or *chauri* were made of yak tails with gold handles, usually two, which were waved alternately by the *chauri* bearers. In addition to this a fan of palm leaves gaily chequered and made of bark, *usira* grass, or peacock feathers was waved by another attendant.

The sword or *khadga*, a symbol of power, was carried by a female attendant, the *khadgavahini*, on her shoulder. She normally stood close behind the king or prince. Thonged sandals originally of boarskin were the king's prerogative. Both sword and sandals were said to rule the kingdom in the absence of the king.

EARLY SATAVAHANA

(200–100 B.C.)

Costume

The people of the Deccan were a hybrid race, a mixture of the aboriginal Dravidians and foreign invaders. In the first century B.C. their costumes too were an interesting mixture of foreign and indigenous garments. All these clothes are represented in Caves IX and X in Ajanta.

In the first century B.C. we find tunics, *kancuka* in the stripes or beehive design worn by attendants or hunters. The *kancuka* are of mid-thigh length with short or long sleeves; in some the opening is on the left side, and in others it is at the front. The tunic worn by a king in hunting dress has no discernible opening at the neck, so it is probably at the back. Necklines too differed in that some were V-shaped and others were round in shape. With the tunic a thick *kayabandh* was wound once or twice around the waist. An elaborate turban *ushnisa,* intertwined with the long black hair of the aborigine wearers was also worn. In addition to these, hunters wore two-bar type sandals with a strap for buckling, which is still seen in the Deccan. As influences from the north and from foreign invaders percolated, the Dravidian aboriginal village women too changed their costume using short *antariyas*, large *uttariyas* with elaborate broad borders covering the head and back, *tikkas* on the forehead and a series of conch or ivory bangles on the arms. Except for the skirt, they looked very much like the Lambadis who are a gypsy tribe of the Deccan today.

In the royal court dress of the Mauryan-Sunga people the female attendants wore transparent long *antariyas* with loose *kayabandhs* tied in a knot at the centre having beautiful ornamental tips. Their many-stringed girdles or *mekhala* were made of beads. Shoulder-length hair held by fillets or top knots tied at the centre of the head seems to denote that these attendants were foreigners, although nothing in the garments worn seems foreign. The king and most of his courtiers wore the indigenous *antariya*, short and informal at home, with the longer style worn in a variety of ways on ceremonial occasions. With this the decorative *kayabandh* was tied in different styles and knots. The *kayabandh* could be tied like a thick cord or be worn looped in a semi-circle at the front with conspicuous side tassels, or be made of thick twisted silk. The *ushnisa* was always worn and a crown or tiara was used when necessary.

Headgear and Hairstyles

The aboriginal jungle women wore rolls and headbands with peacock feathers attached. Village women and commoners wore their hair in a simple knot at the nape covered by a large *uttariya* which, at times, had elaborate broad borders. Court attendants and women of the richer classes wore their hair more fashionably, either in a top knot on the right side with a loop of flowers suspended or in a plait. A fillet, simple or gold embroidered, could be worn to hold it in place.

Most often, the long hair of men was worn intertwined with lengths of cloth to form an *ushnisa* in a variety of ways. Frequently it had a knot—the original top knot of the aboriginals—covered with the cloth of the turban. This knot could be at centre front or protrude over the forehead in a 'conch-shell' shape, or the tuft of hair could be visible on top of the turban.

Jewellery

Jewellery in this period had a massive primitive character in strong contrast to that worn in the later Satavahana period. When indigenous garments are shown on men, whether at court or in villages, all wear some form of jewellery. But when the foreign dress, the *kancuka* or tunic, is worn by hunters, attendants, and soldiers, very little or no jewellery is seen. Most often it consists of just earrings of the wheel-pattern type.

Indigenous jewellery however, consisted of *lambanam*, earrings, and a pair of *kangan* and *baju band* for the males. Women did not wear the *baju band* but wore a large number of bangles made of conch or ivory, disc-type earrings, the *lambanam*, and *tikka* on the forehead. Women attendants at court wore, in addition, the *mekhala*.

Military Costume

Soldiers wore short-sleeved tunics or jackets, with elaborate headgear consisting of either a turban with a top knot, chin band and ear flaps, or two top knots with a turban. They were equipped with axes, and bows and arrows, or carried sickles.. Palace guards however wore the *antariya* with a heavy cloak draped over the left shoulder.

LATE SATAVAHANA

(100 B.C.–A.D. 250)

Costume

Clothing was generally sparse and made of thin cotton. The three articles of clothing, the *antariya*, *uttariya*, and *kayabandh* were widely used, but interesting mixtures of foreign and indigenous garments were fairly prevalent.

The *uttariya* for both men and women was usually white and of cotton or silk. It was however, at times, of beautiful colours and embroidered. Men could wear it across the back and over both shoulders or merely thrown over the chest, and they seldom wore it as a head covering. The *antariya* was still worn by both sexes in the *kachcha* fashion which meant that one end was passed between the legs and tucked in behind, but this way of draping had its own fanciful fashions. For men it was normally to the knees or even shorter. Generally, the *antariya* appears to have been made of almost transparent cloth and was worn very tight and clinging in the case of women. It is almost invisible in the early Andhra sculptures with only double incised lines to show the drape. The *nivi bandha* or preliminary knot to tie the *antariya* at the waist is often alluded to in the literature of ancient India.

The *kayabandh* tied in a bow-shaped knot was worn by both sexes to give further support to the *antariya* at the waist. This item was worn in a variety of ways. The *kayabandh* in the form of a simple sash was called the *vethaka*. The women also wore the *pattika* which was made of flat ribbon-shaped pieces of cloth, usually silk. A heavy-looking thick jewelled roll with hanging tassels—*kakshyabandha*—was worn by men. The *kalabuka* was a girdle made of many strips plaited together, and the *muraja* had drum-headed knots at the ends instead of tassels.

It is in the distinctive ways of wearing these three simple garments the *antariya, uttariya* and *kayabandh* and in the headgear and jewellery, that we can trace the evolution of the costumes and the fashion of the times in areas of India where they were in use. The true *yajnopavita* or sacred thread is found on the sculptures of this period. Before this, it existed more in the form of the *uttariya* worn draped over the left shoulder and under the right arm in the *upavita* fashion from which the term *yajnopavita* seems to have been derived. The *yajnopavita* consisted of three cotton threads each of nine twisted strands, but of hemp for the Kshatriya and of wool for the Vaisya. At a later stage this sacred thread continued to be used in a limited way by other castes but was retained most strongly by the Brahmins.

A stitched shirt-like foreign garment called the *kancuka* was frequently used by attendants, grooms, guards, and so on in the king's court, and an indigenous long tunic was worn by eunuchs and other attendants in the women's apartments in the palace. Women too wore the short *kancuka* with an indigenous *antariya,* or when calf-length it was worn with a *kayabandh* and *uttariya,* and in many other ways.

Headgear and Hairstyles

The *ushnisa* of the men was generally wrapped around three or four times after first covering the top knot of hair with one end. It was normally white but could also be of dyed cloth, and simple turbans were held in position by ornamental gold strips or *pattabandha.* Gold turbans were worn on special occasions. *Kirita* or crowns were also in use, of which one type was a short cylindrical cap studded with gems and ornamented with designs. The *maulibandha* was an elaborate turban wound with the hair which itself was decorated with strings of pearls or flower wreaths. The turban normally covered the hair which was arranged in a large top knot at centre front, and could have a jewelled clasp or *maulimani* at the centre to hold in place the folds of the turban. This top knot could also be pear-shaped or elliptical to give it variety. Without the turban, the hair could be worn in one or two top knots, or one loop and one top knot. Short hair parted in the middle and reaching the neck was fairly prevalent, especially among the common people.

Women wore their hair in several ways. One was in the form of a plait, *praveni*, at the back, decorated with jewelled strips and tassels, as Bharat Natyam dancers do today. Another common style was the coil with five delicate plaits dangling from it, a favourite with all classes of women. In the *kesapasa* style the hair was looped close to the head in an elongated knot at the back of the head or lower down at the nape. This could have a *veni*, a small fillet of flowers, around it or a short garland of flowers dangling from it. If the hair was made in a simple knot it was known as *kabaribandha*. The *dhammilia* was elaborate dressing of the hair with flowers, pearls, and jewels that often completely covered the hair like a close cap or turban. This style was greatly admired in the Satavahana kingdom.

Women no longer wore the turban of earlier periods. Special ornaments were designed to be worn in the hair. The *chudamani* was lotus-shaped, its petals composed of pearls and precious stones. It was worn normally in the centre of the knotted hair. The *makarika* was shaped like a fish-crocodile and worn at the front parting of the hair, very like the gold ornament worn by the Uriya women in the northern Circars. There were also small crownlike fillets through which the hair was drawn and then plaited or hung loose.

Jewellery

Strands of pearls were the main motif in all forms of jewellery particularly in the late period of the Satavahana empire. Both men and women wore earrings, bracelets, armlets and necklaces as in previous periods, particularly the indigenous people. The more common design in earrings was the *kundala* shaped like a coil, which could be simple or decorative. The *talapatra* originated from a small strip of palm leaf rolled and inserted into the lobe. This shape was later made from ivory or gold and could be gem-studded. A full-blown lotus design the *kanaka-kamala* set in rubies is still popular in south India, and a couple of generations ago the *karnika* or *jimiki* continued to be in use. This was in the shape of a lotus seed-pod fixed upside down like a tassel. Necklaces or *hara* were mainly strung with pearls, sometimes consisting of only a single string called *ekavali*. A necklace of gems and gold beads was called *yashti*, the central bead being often larger than the others. Several of these necklaces could be worn together. Sometimes three or five slab-like gems, *phalaka*, were inserted at regular intervals. These held together the several strings of which a necklace was composed, and the whole was called a *phalakahara*.

A simple perfumed cotton-thread necklace was known to have been in use, and tiger claws were strung around the necks of children probably to ward off the evil eye. The *yajnopavita*, or a sacred thread made of pearls called the *muktayajnopavita*, were prevalent. *Kantha*, the shorter form of necklace, continued to be in use and was often of gold set with rubies and emeralds. Also, the gold-coin necklace *nishka* strung on silk thread or plaited gold cord was worn in almost the same design as the modern *putalya* of Maharashtra and the *malai* of Tamil Nadu. These gold coins were sometimes replaced by mango-shaped pieces of gold or gold set with gems, like the contemporary *mangamalai* of south India. Men and women wore bracelets *valaya* of solid gold set with precious stones. The more delicate ones were made of filigree, and elegant rope-shaped ones of fine gold wire were worn generally by women. They also used bangles of ivory and rhinoceros horn. Slab-like gems when set into bracelets, like the *phalakahara* necklace, were called *phalakavalaya*.

Armlets or *keyura* for both sexes were close-fitting and could be engraved or set with jewels, or be in the shape of a snake; also, they could be straight-edged or have an angular top edge. Jewelled girdles of one or many strings, *mekhala*, were worn only by women. These were made in several varieties from the tinkling *kanci* with bells to the *rasana* style made of a linked chain or strung with pearls, beads or precious stones. These girdles, besides being very attractive, held up the lower garment or *antariya*. In addition, cloth girdles or *kayabandh* like those of the men described earlier in this chapter, were also used for the same purpose.

Anklets, worn again only by women, had an astonishing variety. The *manjira* was hollow and light, coiling several times around the ankles loosely, and tinkling when in motion as it had gems inserted in the hollow. This type is still worn in Marwar. The *nupura* was plain while the *kinkini* had small bells suspended. A heavier looking one was the *tulakoti* whose two ends were enlarged at their meeting point. This form is still worn in Andhra. Tinkling anklets of any kind were not worn by the wife in the absence of her husband. The finger ring or *anguliyaka* is visible on some of the Satavahana sculptures but only after A.D. 150.

The *hemavaikaksha* was an ornament worn by women, seen more frequently in the Kushan period. It consisted of two long wreaths of flowers or pearls crossed at the breasts.

Military Costume

Andhra soldiers wore an *antariya* which was shortened by lifting it at the hemline and tucking it into the waist to facilitate marching, and the style is still used in Tamil Nadu. A cloth sash or *kayabandh* was wound tightly many times around the waist for support and was sometimes crossed at the chest for protection. This developed in later times into the *channavira* which was similar in function to the early Babylonian and Assyrian sword belts crossed at the chest with a metal buckle in the centre. In addition, the military personnel of this period occasionally wore earrings and simple jewellery.

Saka foreign soldiers were employed by some of the Andhra kings in the royal bodyguard. They wore a heavy tunic with ruched sleeves which reached to the knees or mid-thigh. With it was worn a form of *churidar* or ruched trousers, and their helmet or *sirastra* had ear flaps. A wide sash was worn at the waist. Sometimes a short quilted tunic was worn with a heavy drape over the left shoulder along with a turban—a mixture of the foreign and indigenous garment. Footwear was not incumbent for soldiers and was probably worn by foreign rather than indigenous troops.

The equipment of a trained fighter was mainly his sword, shield, bow, axe and spear; sometimes the mace, club, and javelin were used. Swords were either curved or straight and could have a sharp edge on one or both sides. They were 30 inches long and beautifully crafted. Handles of ivory or horn and hilts of precious metals encrusted with jewels were carried by those in command, and simpler ones of bamboo or wood were used by the common soldier. These swords in their sheaths, *kosha,* of fine-tooled leather were normally fastened on the left side of the waist. Smaller and more ornamental swords and daggers were fastened by gold chains.

Shields, mainly rectangular in shape, were purely functional and large enough to protect the body. The club or *gada* could be short or long but was immensely heavy and was used for striking the enemy forcefully. The bow or *dhanush* made of wood or horn was painted red and gaily decorated, but the bamboo bow was more common. The bow string was made of sinew or hemp. The heads of the arrows were of iron, bone, wood and were carved into animal and other shapes, and had shafts of feathers affixed with sinews. Sometimes the arrow tips were dipped in poison.

Religious Persons

The Buddhist monks were now in a very powerful position and had more or less abjured their vow of poverty. Their clothes now retained a semblance of patchwork but were composed of rich pieces of cloth of the same colour, symmetrically arranged together in checks, and most probably presented to the Buddhist order by rich donors, as referred to in the Jatakas.

Hindu ascetics continued to wear their bark strip garments *valkala* with a deer skin over the left shoulder in the style known as *ajinayajnopavita*. Their hair was tied in a heavy bundled top-knot of matted locks called the *jata-bhara* and sometimes the hair was worn in small plaits. The priests were Brahmins who wore white garments but added a red turban when officiating at ceremonial functions.

Jain monks and nuns have retained their white robes to this day, and all their beliefs and customs have remained unchanged because of their strong conservatism.

Textiles and Dyes

From Mauryan times and even earlier, the manufacture of textiles in India had flourished and there are constant references to its variety in the Brahmanical, Buddhist, and Jain works. Coarse and fine varieties of cotton were in great demand. Silk formed an important part of the rich person's wardrobe. A very cheap material made of hemp was worn by the weavers and by labourers of all kinds. Wool was not needed much in the part of India ruled by the Satavahanas which had a warm climate, but it was used in the form of *chaddars* or blankets in winter.

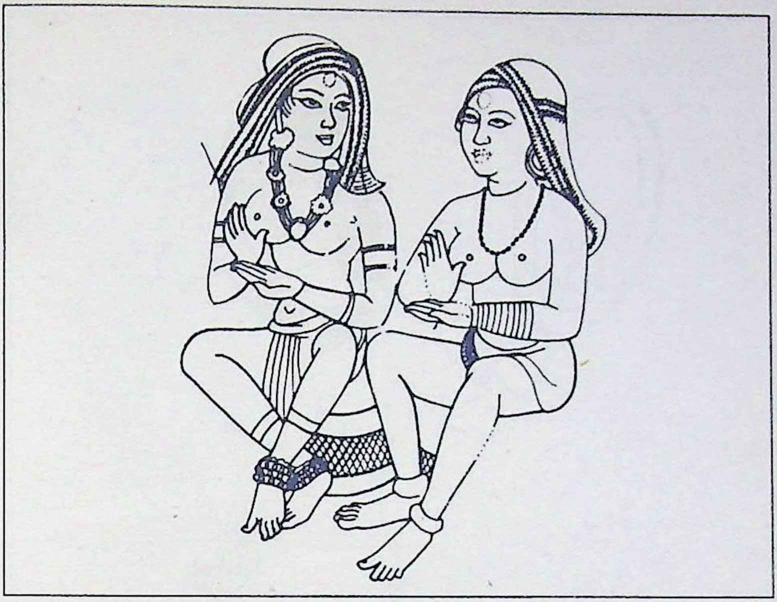
There was a variety of dyes available from Vedic times, indigo, yellow, crimson, magenta, black and turmeric. Since washermen were also dyers, these colours were well-known to them and the knowledge of the dyeing processes was probably handed down to each successive generation.

Varieties and mixtures of colours known to those countries with which the Satavahanas did a great deal of trade, like China, Persia, and Rome, must also have been incorporated to extend their range of coloured textiles.

Printed and woven designs on textiles were plentiful and embroidery in gold was also common among the richer classes. The *uttariya,* in particular, was very often of silk and embroidered with flowers all over, or had a pattern of birds along with flowers. Precious stones were often used in the borders of these *uttariyas* or they were dyed blue or red, but a spotless white remained the favourite with men.

Style

The late Satavahana style expressed more directly the full impact of the Dravidian-Andhra ethos. With the crowded compositions of lean and strong bodies and the ferocious figures looming over terrified crowds, we feel a sense of frenzied activity and turbulence. The *kayabandhs* make complex arabesques, but there is less differentiation between the court and the people as they throng together.



13. VILLAGE WOMEN
(*Ajanta, Cave X*)

Antariya
short and worn in *kachcha* style

Uttariya
of heavy material with elaborate broad borders worn straight or crosswise over the head and thrown back over the shoulders

Mekhala
woman on the right wears a two-stringed bead hip girdle

Lambanam
necklace of the woman on the left is in the *phalakahara* style; the other wears a simple string of beads

Karnika
woman on the right wears disc-type earrings called *dehri*

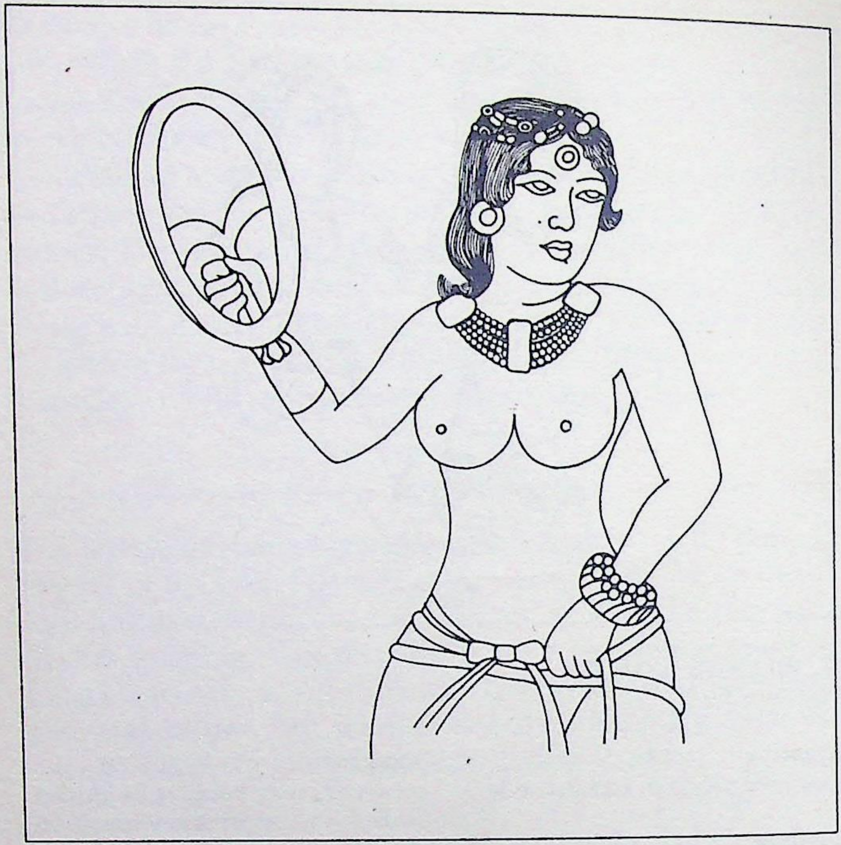
Kangan
conch or ivory bangles in graded sizes are worn by the woman on the right

Kara
single, heavy anklets are worn by the woman on the right, the other wears three on each ankle with a granulated design

Baju Band
single flat band with raised edges or two narrow bands

Hairstyle
large bun at the nape

Bindi
either painted or affixed on the forehead



14. COURT ATTENDANT

(*Ajanta, Cave X*)

Antariya
of sheer cotton

Kayabandh
narrow *pattika* tied in a bow at the front of the waist

Kantha
phalakahara style necklace

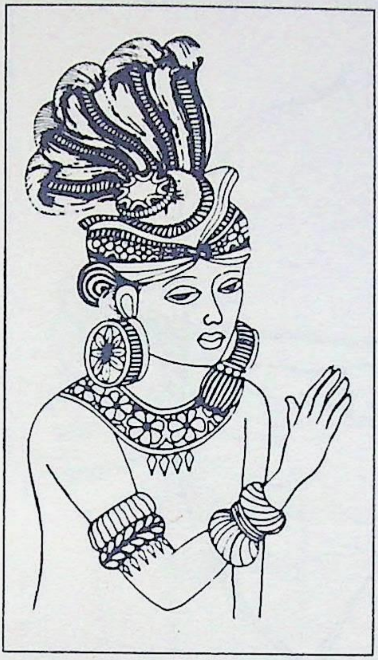
Karnika
simple disc-type earrings called *dehri*

Kangan
both granulated and plain seen on the left arm

Hairstyle
centre parting, hair hanging loose to the shoulders and decorated with ornamental chains

Sitara
large disc at the forehead, either painted or affixed

She carries a fan typical of the times.



15. NAGA KING
(*Ajanta, Cave IX*)

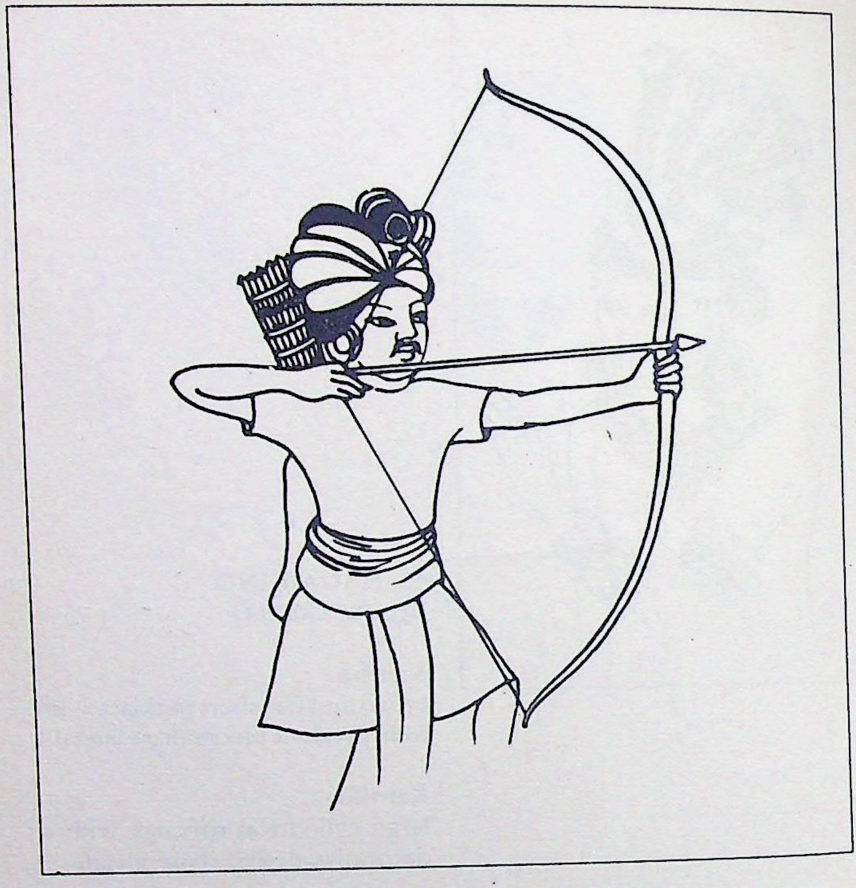
Kantha
broad and flat short necklace with four pendant pieces (base-metal)

Karnika
large cylindrical earrings with a decorative design (base-metal)

Kangan
heavy and cylindrical bracelets (base-metal)

Baju Band
thick cylindrical armlets with pendant pieces (base-metal)

Head-dress
turban is twisted around the head and held with a decorative band; hair is long, as worn by aboriginals, and is arranged in a top knot and five crests with ribbons like serpents' hoods



16. **KING AS HUNTER**
(*Ajanta, Cave X*)

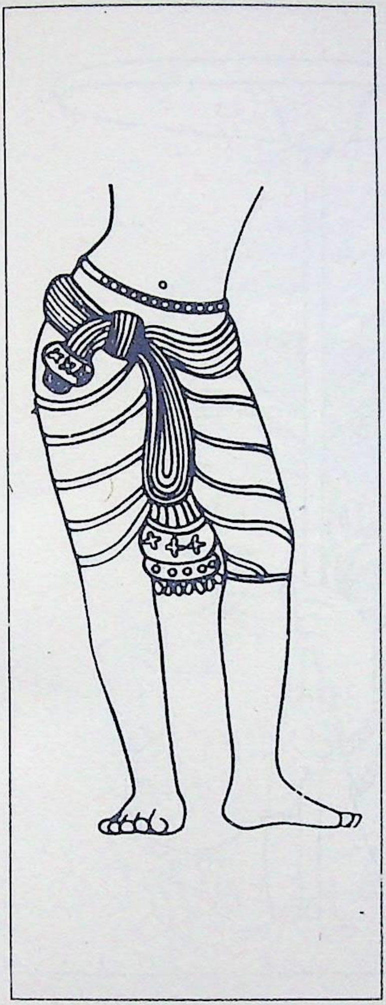
Kancuka
mid-thigh length tunic with round neck and short magyar-type sleeves

Kayabandh
wide, worn wrapped around the waist a couple of times and tucked in

Ushnisa
turban cloth wound with hair and twisted into a top knot; the rest of the cloth is then wound around the head

Karnika
ring-like earrings, *kundala* type

Although not visible, a short langoti-type antariya is worn.

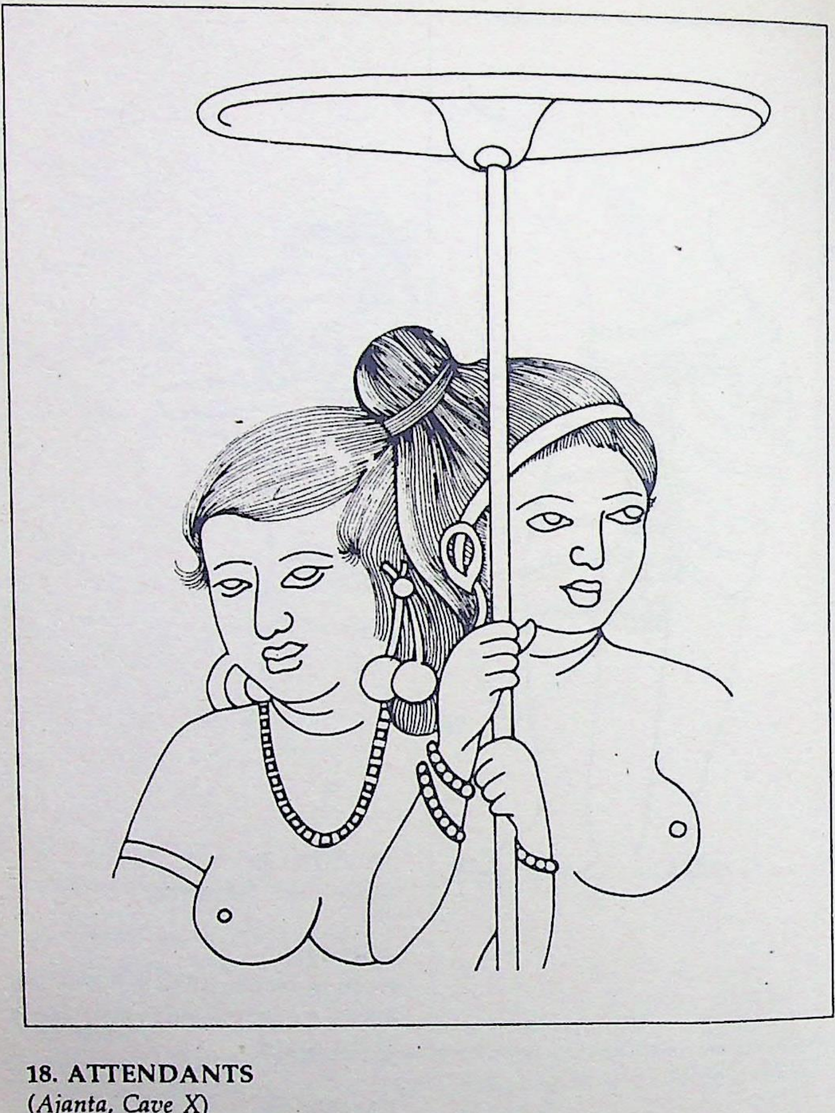


17. PRINCE
(*Amaravati, 1st period*)

Antariya
worn in *kachcha* style to below the knees; the stripes indicate the folds of the drape

Kayabandh
kakshyabandha style, a thick roll worn aslant at the hips with beautiful ornamental tips and tied in a large loop-knot

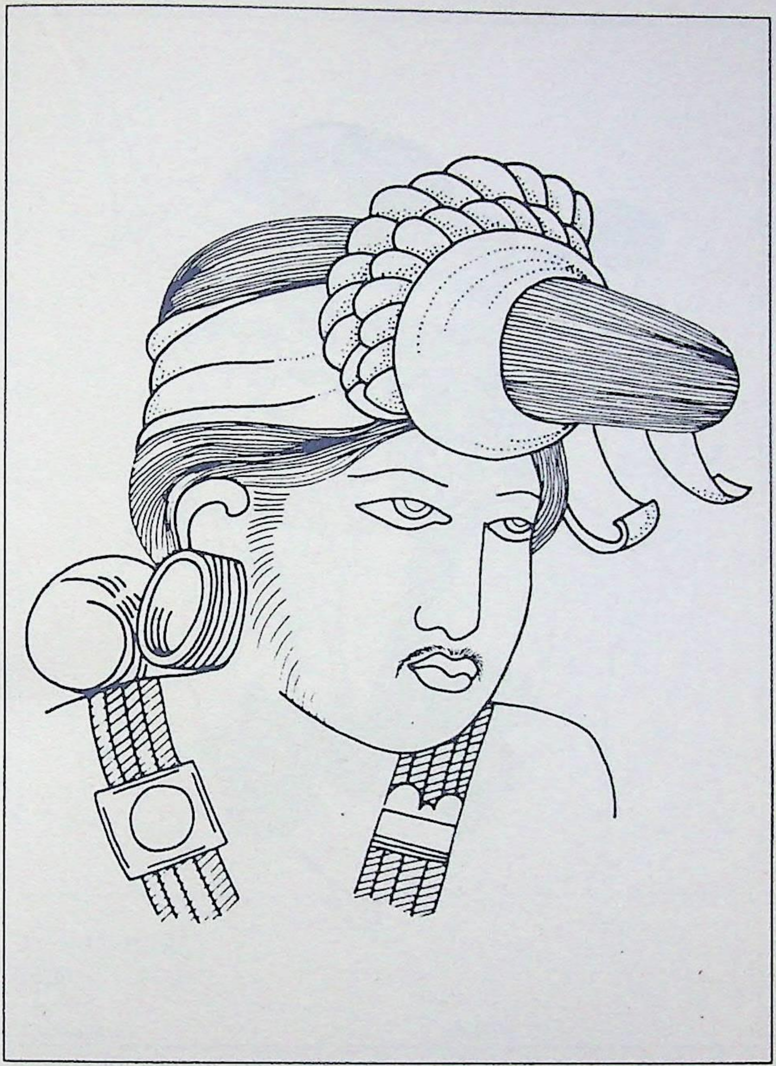
Belt
with granulated pattern worn higher than the *antariya*



18. ATTENDANTS
(*Ajanta, Cave X*)

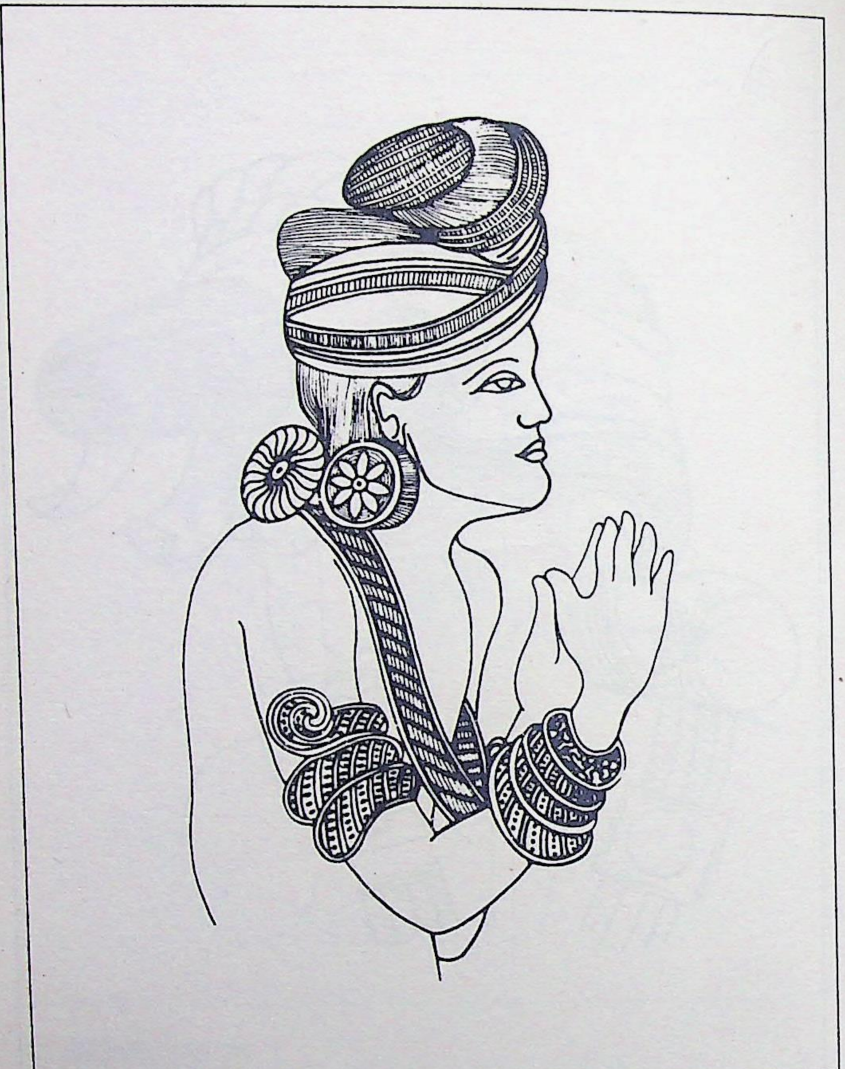
attendant on the left wears her hair parted at the left and hanging loosely to the shoulders, her earrings are of the pendant type; the one on the right is the umbrella bearer or *chhatradhar*, she wears her hair held back by a fillet and made into a top knot

The umbrella carrier was usually a woman. The umbrella was normally a coloured one with a handle of gold workmanship, a white one being the emblem of the king alone.



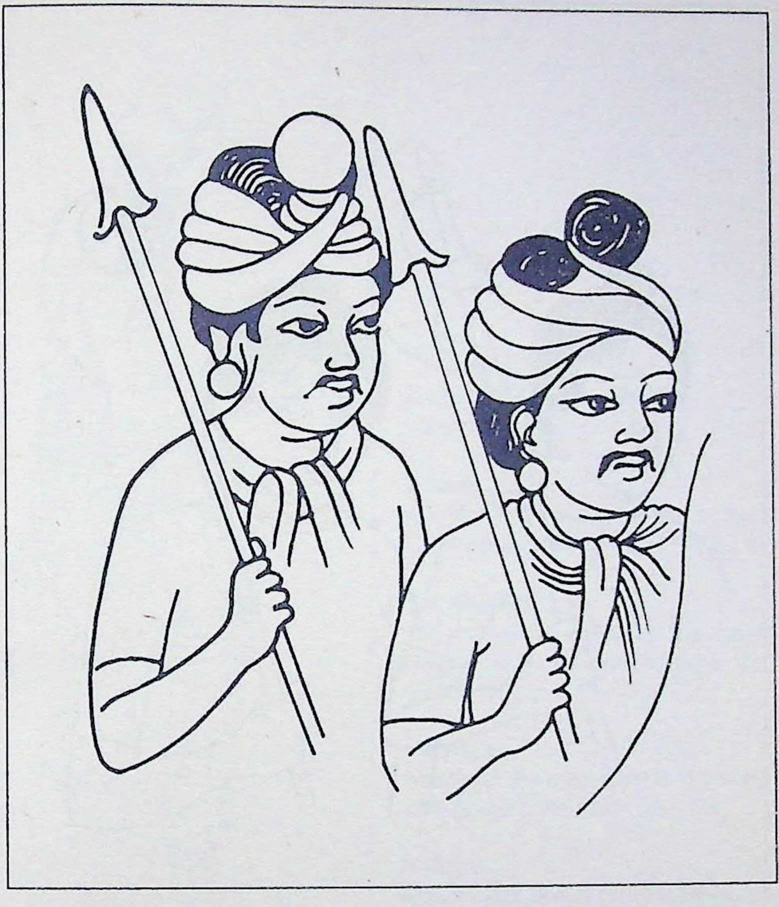
19. COURTIER
(*Ajanta, Cave X*)

hair is brought forward in a 'conch-shell' knot and decorated; the fillet is probably used to keep it in place; earrings are disc-type and necklace is of the *phalakahara* style with chains held at intervals by flat pieces



20. NAGA PRINCE
(*Ajanta, Cave IX*)

hair is arranged in a large top knot at the centre with the turban wound around the head after twisting it around the knot, a brooch decorates the centre of the top knot; earrings are of the double disc-type; necklace, bracelets and armlets are made of base-metal, and are probably hollow



21. SOLDIERS
(*Ajanta, Cave X*)

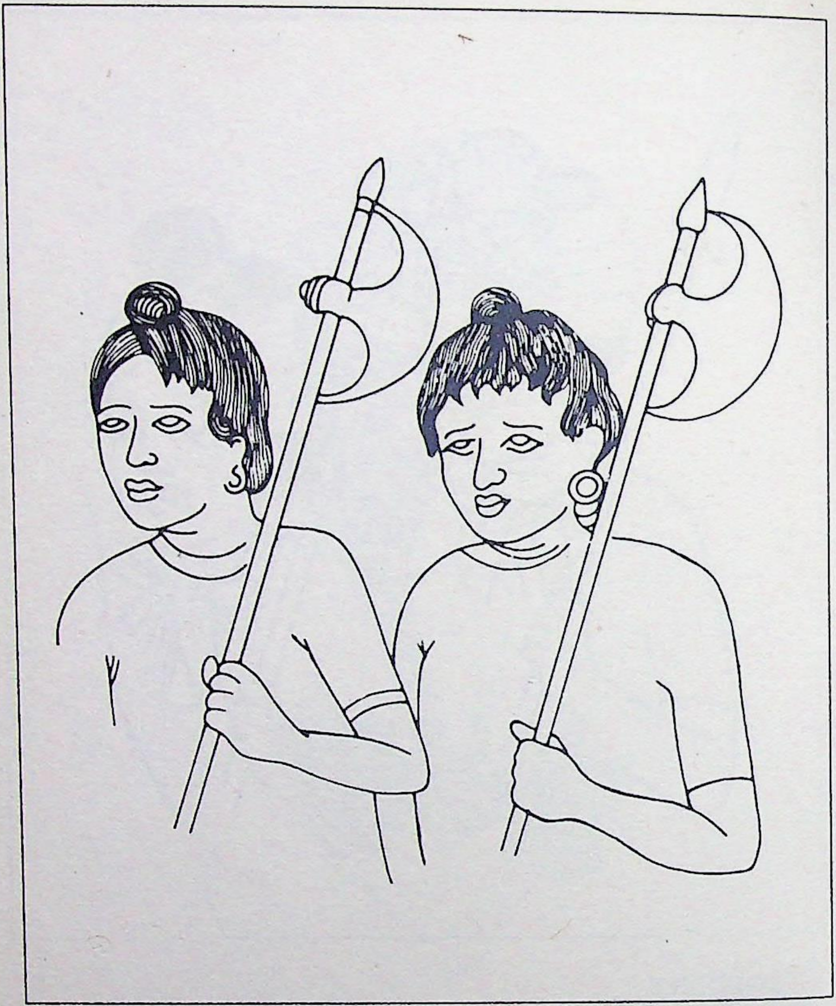
Kancuka
mid-thigh length tunic with short sleeves

Uttariya
tied around the neck to free the arms

Karnika
disc-type earrings called *dehri*

Ushnisa
turban twisted around and through double top knots of hair

They are carrying a kind of spear in their hands.



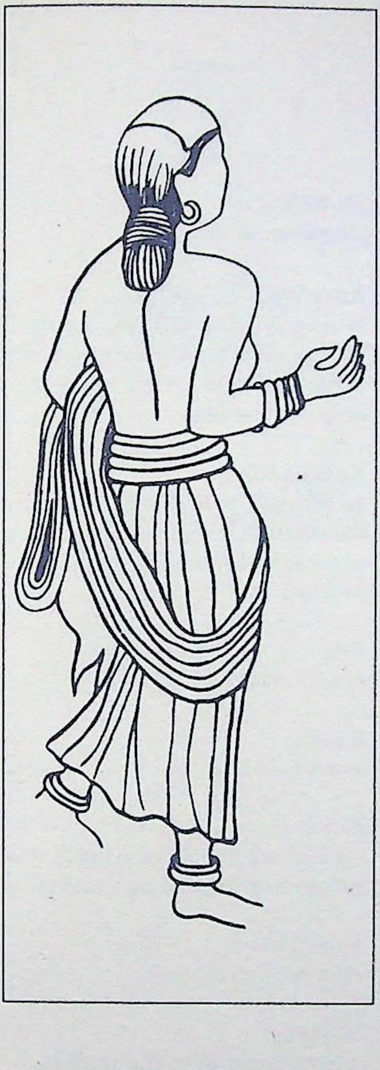
22. SOLDIERS
(*Ajanta, Cave X*)

Kancuka
both have short-sleeved tunics with round necks, the neck opening is obviously at the back

Karnika
kundala or ring-type earrings

Hairstyle
simple top knot at the centre of the head very like that worn by the hillmen of South Manipur and Burma called the Chins

They carry battle axes.



23. WOMAN
(*Amaravati, 4th period*)

Ghagri
gathered calf-length skirt probably with a drawstring at the waist

Kayabandh
simple *vethaka* style, but long and wound several times around the waist

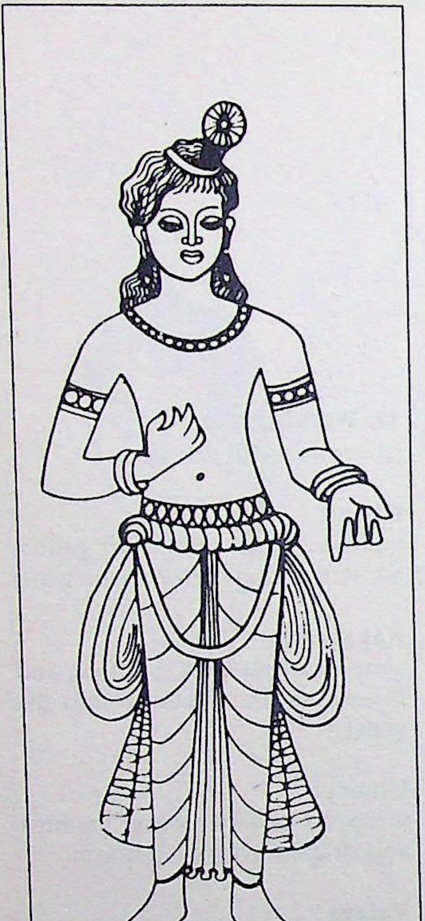
Uttariya
wrapped loosely around the hips and draped over the left arm

Valaya
several bangles of ivory or rhinoceros horn

Kundala
ring-type earrings

Manjira
hollow light anklets, coiling twice around and probably making a tinkling sound in movement

Hairstyle
drawn back into a simple knot at the nape



24. KING

(*Nagarjunakonda*)

Antariya
falling to the ankles, worn in *kachcha* style with pleats tucked in at the back and visible in the front between the legs

Kayabandh
elaborately rolled and twisted at the waist, falling in graceful loops at the sides with one rope-like loop in front

Belt
ornamental belt

Kantha
short necklace

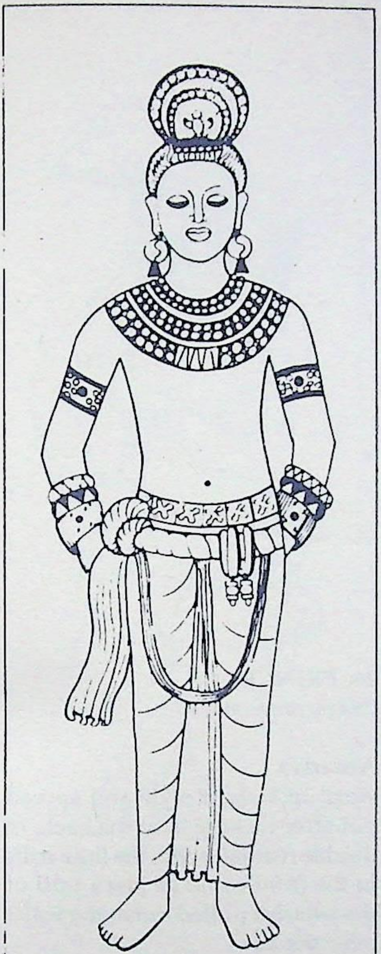
Keyura
straight-edged armlets with pressed or filigree decoration

Kundala
ring-type earrings

Valaya
simple bangles at the wrists

Hairstyle
loose to the shoulders with a small fringe at the forehead

Headgear
an ornamental disc attached to a head band or top knot



25. PRINCE

(*Golī*)

Antariya
worn in the same style as in Fig. 24.

Kayabandh
twisted rope-like around the waist, then twisted twice to form a knot at the right hip; the other end suspended in front ends in two ornamental tips

Belt
ornamental belt

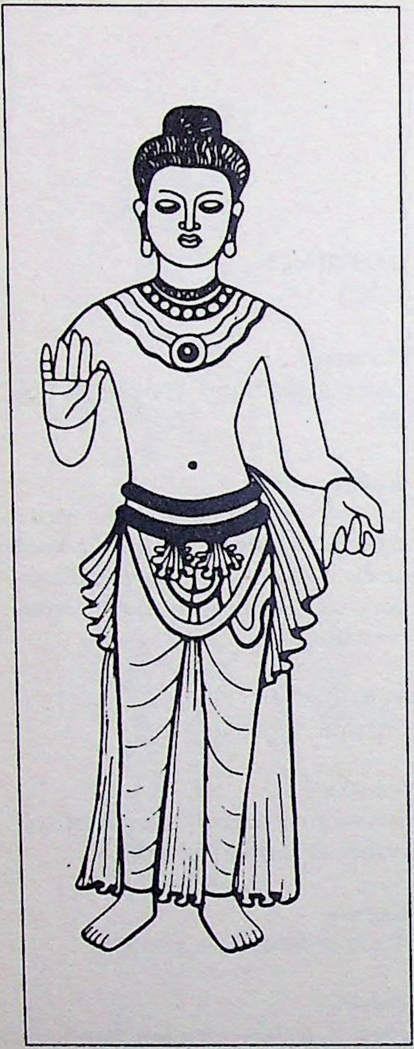
Kantha
three of different sizes worn together to form a collar

Keyura
flat and decorative armlets

Valaya
three bracelets on each hand of some heavy metal or bone and incised with patterns

Kundala
ring-type earrings with tassels suspended

Headgear
ornamental disc worn in front of *jatta* or knot of hair



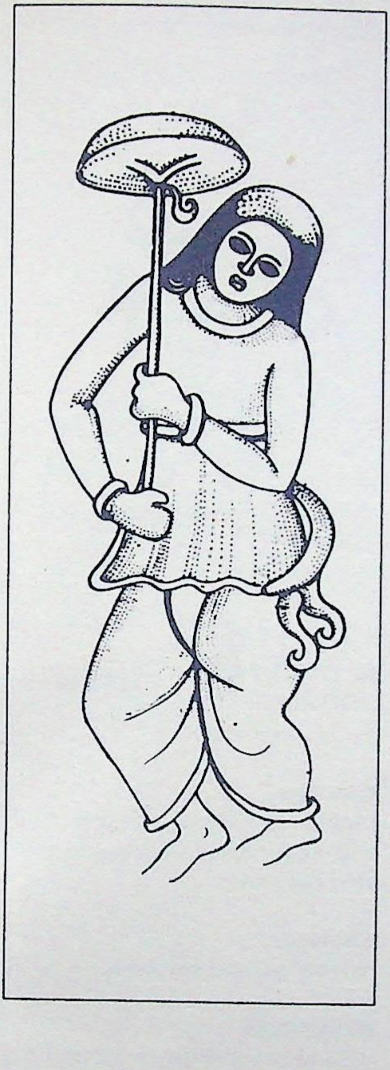
26. PRINCE
(*Nagarjunakonda*)

Antariya
worn in *kachcha* style and spread out after tucking in at the back, in double fish-tail style; the little frills in the front could be just a puff of the *antariya* pulled out at the waist over the *nada*

Kayabandh
rolled twice at the waist, then looped in the front so that the two ends are worn loosely spread out as a frill at each side

Kantha
collar-like necklace

Hairstyle
in top knot



27. CHATTRADHARA: UMBRELLA BEARER

(*South India*)

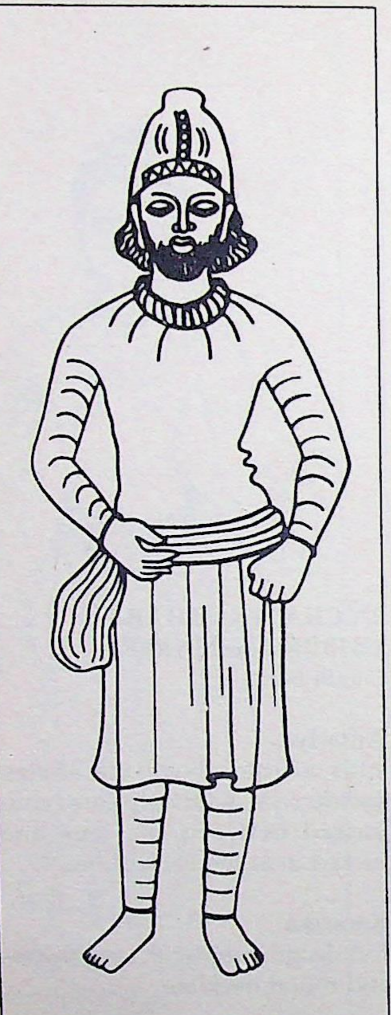
Antariya
ends a little above the ankles; *kachcha* style, with the pleated ends passed between the legs and tucked in at the back centre

Kancuka
fork-length tunic with long sleeves and round neckline

Kayabandh
simple sash *vethaka* style, tied at the back with hanging ends

Umbrella
white with gold work on the handle

Hairstyle
simple, worn hanging loose at the back



28. DVARPALA: DOOR-KEEPER
(*Nagarjunakonda*)

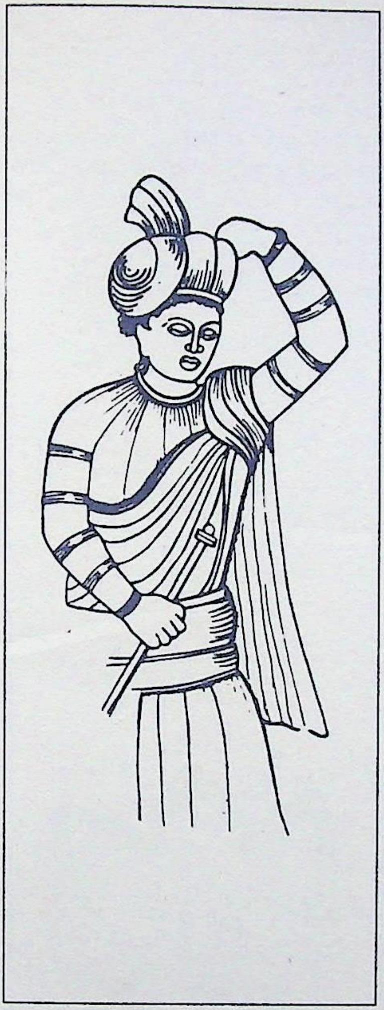
Kancuka
knee-length tunic of heavy cloth with long ruched sleeves and gathered neckline

Churidar
narrow ruched trousers

Kayabandh
wound several times around the waist

Headgear
helmet with peaked top called *sirastra*, sometimes with ear flaps

Torque
necklace of twisted wire



29. ATTENDANT
(*Nagarjunakonda*)

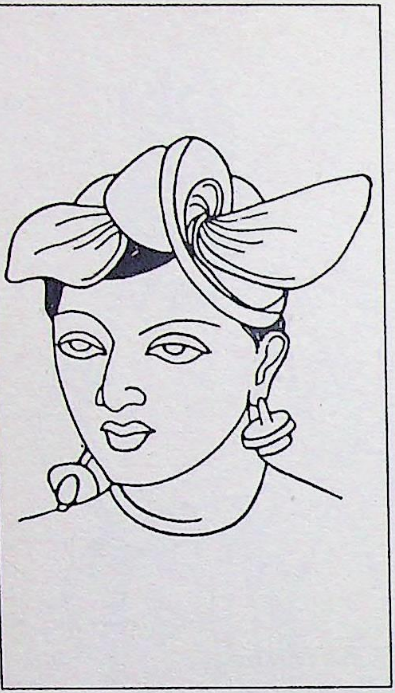
Kancuka
probably calf-length, it has a gathered neckline with a band and long sleeves decorated with a braid in stripes

Uttariya
heavy and long, draped formally across the chest and around the left shoulder

Ḳayabandh
heavy, wound twice around the waist

Headgear
turban with a fan-shaped frill

Probably a master of ceremonies, he carries a staff.

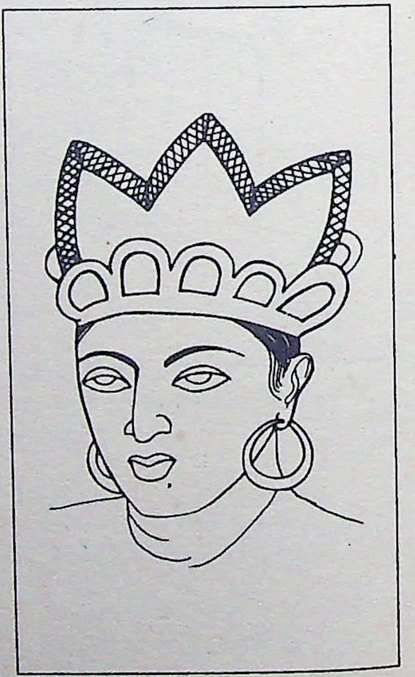


30. MALE
(*Ajanta Cave X*)

Ushnisa
turban tied casually in a knot with one end going down and the other up

Kundala
suspended disc-type earrings

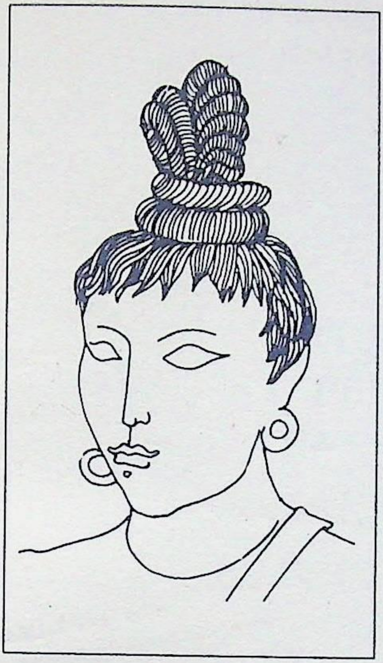
←



31. FEMALE
(*Ajanta Cave X*)

Kirita
a crown-like headgear with semicircular motifs in front and larger lotus petal designs at the back

Kundala
large ring-type earrings →



32. PRINCE

(Nagarjunakonda)

long hair is drawn up into several twisted loops held by two twisted coils, the shorter hair being allowed to hang loose around the face

←

33. BUDDHA

(Goli)

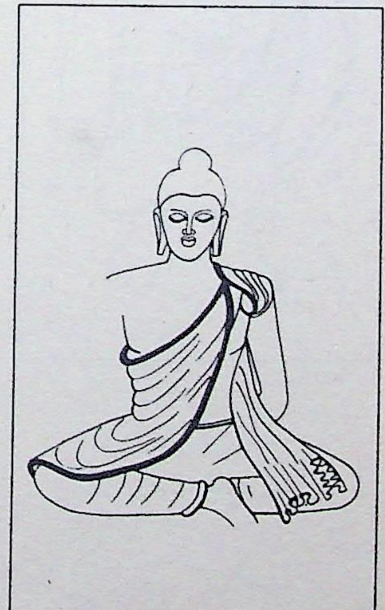
Antariya
worn in *lehnga* style

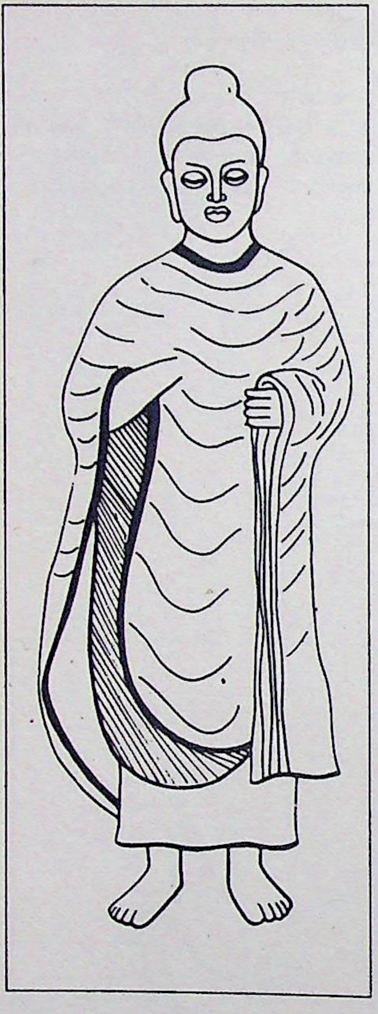
Uttariya
the upper cloth has a border and is worn in an interesting drape on the left shoulder and hangs at the back loosely to fork length

Hairstyle
in top knot

This depiction of the Buddha as preacher gives an idea of the type of clothes worn by those Buddhist monks who travelled and preached both in India and abroad. The colour of their garments was reddish-yellow and no jewellery was worn.

→





34. BUDDHA
(Goli)

Antariya
worn in *lehnga* style almost up to ankle length

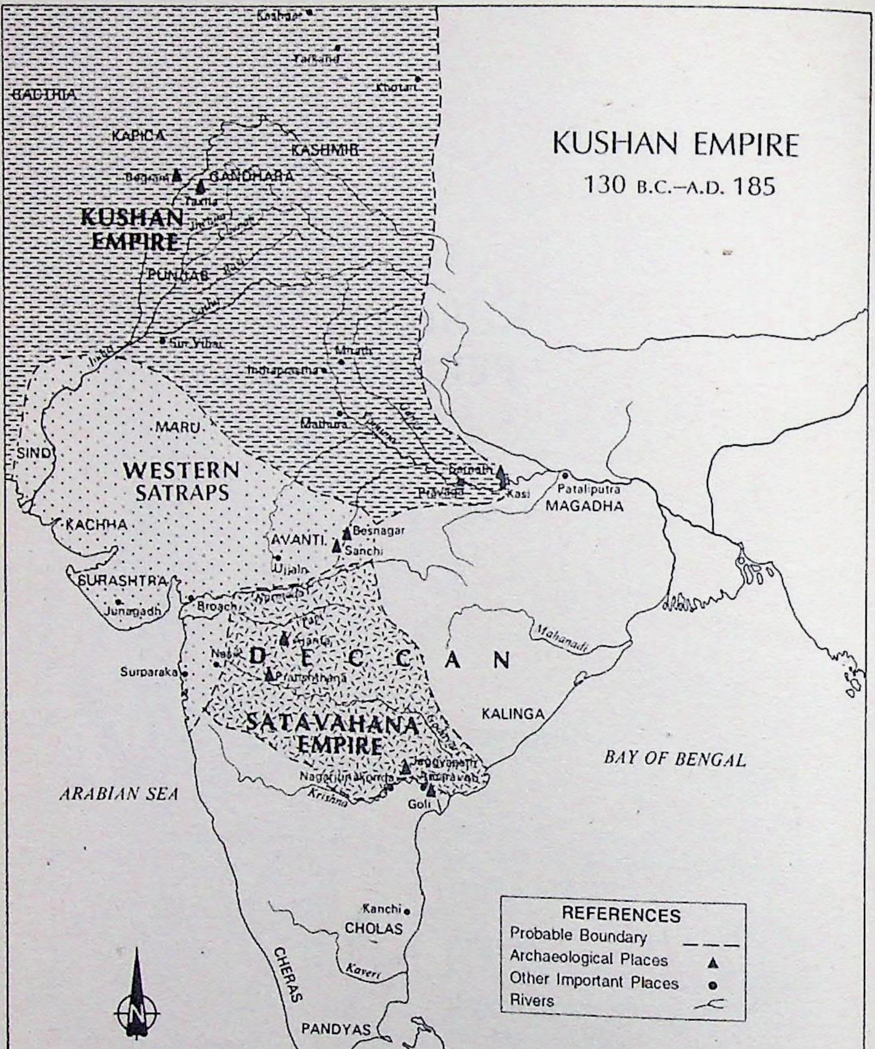
Uttariya
wide upper cloth draped across the body to form folds and resting on the left arm

Hairstyle
in top knot

This depicts the Buddha on his way to Yashodara, his wife. The uttariya could be the large chaddar used when travelling.

KUSHAN PERIOD

(130 B.C.–A.D. 185)


KUSHAN EMPIRE
130 B.C.–A.D. 185
Kashgar
Yarkand
Khotan
BACTRIA
KAPICA
KASHMIR
Begram
GANDHARA
Taxila
KUSHAN EMPIRE
Jhelum
Chenab
PUNJAB
Ravi
Sutlej
Sui Vihar
Indus
Mirath
Indraprastha
Mathura
Yamuna
Ganga
MARU
SIND
WESTERN SATRAPS
Sarnath
Prayaga
Kasi
Pataliputra
MAGADHA
KACHHA
AVANTI
Besnagar
Sanchi
Ujjain
SURASHTRA
Junagadh
Broach
Narmada
Tapi
Ajanta
Nasik
D E C C A N
Pratishthana
Surparaka
Mahanadi
KALINGA
SATAVAHANA EMPIRE
Godavari
Jaggayyapeta
Amaravati
Nagarjunakonda
Krishna
Goli
ARABIAN SEA
BAY OF BENGAL
Kanchi
CHOLAS
Kaveri
CHERAS
PANDYAS
SIMHALA
INDIAN OCEAN
N
REFERENCES
Probable Boundary
Archaeological Places ▲
Other Important Places ●
Rivers

KUSHAN PERIOD

(130 B.C.–A.D.185)

Main archaeological sites of interest for costumes

- Mathura
- Besnagar
- Begram
- Taxila
- Gandhara (in a limited way, as the emphasis was on Graeco-Roman costume)

History and Social Life

The Kushans established their empire in the first century A.D. and were contemporaneous with the Satavahana (Andhra) and Western Satraps (Sakas) kingdoms during part of the second century A.D.

Unlike the political stability of the Mauryan empire, this period was marked by continuous changes in the boundaries of power and immense cultural and linguistic differences. The only cohesive factor was trade, which had been initiated in the Mauryan period, as a stable government ensured communication between various parts of the empire and encouraged active internal trade. Contact was established with many parts of western Asia and the Mediterranean by means of envoys. This naturally helped foreign trade, and the influx of foreigners, Kushans, Sakas, and Indo-Greeks, gave even more impetus to trade relations with these areas.

There are two completely distinct styles in Kushan art. Gandhara, in the northern part of the empire, was built by craftsmen from eastern Rome who were employed by patrons of Buddhism. These craftsmen brought with them the Graeco-Roman style, particularly in the drapery of the sculpture, so that the Buddhists represented there were dressed in the classical Greek and Roman garments, the *chiton, rimation, stola, tunica, chlamys*, etc.

The second style in Kushan art was that which arose in Mathura, the southern capital of the empire. This style was a direct continuation of the native Indian schools of Bharut and Sanchi. But a clearer picture of the actual Kushan costume is seen in the sculpture at Surkh Kotal in Afghanistan, the influence on style there being Parthian (eastern Iranian). The Parthians themselves were of Scythic stock like the Kushans, and their costume is much the same and resembles closely the portrait of Kanishka, the great Kushan king, found at Mathura. The latter wears, in addition to his tunic and trousers, a fur-lined coat or *pustin* which is also seen at Surkh Kotal.

As mentioned earlier, there was no uniformity in this period and the dress of the people too varied with each region. The ordinary dress consisted as usual of an *antariya, uttariya* and *kayabandh*, with a turban for men. With the advent of the Kushans this was extended, and the fashion of wearing sewn garments of central Asiatic pattern seems to have made headway with all classes of Indians in north India. The cut-and-sewn garments which are rarely visible in the sculptures of the previous periods are more commonly found in this period.

Costume

Kushan costumes may be divided into five types: the costume worn by (i) indigenous people—the *antariya, uttariya,* and *kayabandh*, (ii) guardians and attendants of the harem—usually the indigenous and sewn *kancuka*, red-brown in colour, (iii) foreign Kushan rulers and their entourage, and (iv) other foreigners such as grooms, traders, etc.

There was a fifth category—a mixture of foreign and indigenous garments. This last category is of great interest as it shows how clothes changed and evolved, how some of the purely draped garments of the Indians were replaced by cut-and-sewn garments, especially in the north and north-west where influences were felt more keenly, and where climatically sewn garments were more suitable.

The Kushan (Indo-Scythian) dress had evolved from a nomad culture based on the use of the horse. It is seen at Mathura, Taxila, Begram, and Surkh Kotal in Afghanistan. This dress was worn by most of the Scythian and Iranian races and resembled particularly that of the Parthians. It consisted of a ruched long-sleeved tunic with a slit for the neck opening, simple or elaborately decorated. The close-fitting knee-length tunic was sometimes made of leather, and with it could be worn a short cloak or a calf-length woollen coat or *caftan*, worn loose or crossed over from right to left and secured by a belt of leather or metal. Besides these two upper garments, occasionally a third garment the *chugha* was used. The *chugha* was coat-like and decorated with a border down the chest and hemline, and had slits to facilitate movement. The trousers could be of linen, silk, or muslin in summer but were woollen or quilted in winter. These loose or close-fitting trousers, *chalana*, were tucked into soft padded boots with leather trappings, *khapusa*. Along with this was worn the Scythian pointed cap of felt, *bashylk*, or peaked helmet or head band with two long ends tied at the back.

Although, the clothes were simple, they were often adorned with stamped gold or metal plates, square, rectangular, circular, or triangular sewn in lines or at the central seams of the tunic. Their purpose was not only decorative but functional as well, as they helped to lift the tunic in the middle for riding, by gathering the cloth along the seams. This helped to give the distinctive draped effect with four sharp pointed ends at the hemline. The drape of trousers too was held in place by means of these gold or metal plates stitched down the centre front. It is interesting to note that elaborate embroidered panels later replaced these gold or metal plates. An earlier version was used by the Saka warriors, where the tunic was simply picked up and tucked into the belt on two sides at centre front, to free the spread of the knees when riding a horse.

Clothes for women were varied. At Gandhara there are figures wearing a sari-like garment which seems to have evolved from Palmyrene (Graeco-Roman) or pure Roman dress. This is the *palla* (draped-over garment worn over a long gown with ruched sleeves which was typical of the Roman matron) pinned at the left shoulder. The difference in some of the Gandhara female figures is that they wear, in addition, an *antariya* which is extended in length. This long *antariya* is worn in the *kachcha* style but one end continues over the left shoulder and is broached there like the *palla*. The total ensemble looks very much like the Deccani sari of today. The long ruched sleeves are visible underneath and could be a shortened version of the Roman long gown (*stola*) worn as a covering for the breasts. In addition, the typical Indian *uttariya* is worn across the back and over both arms, and Indian jewellery completes the ensemble. The wearing of an *uttariya* with the sari is still seen in the fisherfolk of Maharashtra.

These Gandhara figures are some of the most intriguing sculptures of the Kushan period, and may well show the beginning of the sari and one of the earlier attempts to create a garment to cover the breasts. This would fall under the category of a mixture of foreign and indigenous garments. In yet another female figure we find a Persian-influenced knee or mid-thigh length tunic, *stanamsuka*, worn with the *antariya*. The latter is not passed between the legs as in the *kachcha* style, but is worn crossed-over in the *lehnga* style. Simple stitched skirts, *ghagri*, with a side seam and *nada* or string to hold them up at the waist are also seen. They are gathered in folds from lengths of about 6–8 feet, and have a decorative border at the hem and at the centre front seam. The tunic, *stanamsuka*, is form-fitting with long sleeves, a simple round neckline, and flaring at the hemline. Besides the above mentioned, the *lehnga* style *antariya* and the *uttariya* is sometimes worn. But very little in the way of elaborate jewellery is used.

There are also some figures of women wearing close-fitting ruched trousers with a long-sleeved jacket and an *uttariya*. In the earlier period, trousers were worn by Greek and Persian women. It is said that Amazons wearing trousers formed the royal guard of the king. These female guards adapted their own Phrygian costume to a tight mid-thigh length jacket with crossover at the neck and a gathered or pleated skirt worn with the *antariya*, along with a crossed *vaikaksha* with metal buckle shield and sword. Servants and dancers from many parts of the world were brought into the country from a very early period in Indian history. The *pravara* or *chaddar*, a large shawl, continued to be worn by both sexes as protection against the cold and it was known to have been perfumed with *bakul*, jasmine, and other scents. The purely indigenous *antariya*, *uttariya* and *kayabandh* continued to be the main costumes of Indians with slight modifications. The *kayabandh* became a more loosely worn informal piece of attire, and was a wide twisted sash used mainly by women in many delightful ways to enhance the suppleness of the waist.

Headgear and Hairstyles : Women

The wearing of the *uttariya* on the head seems to have almost disappeared in this period and most of the women in indigenous costume are seen bare-headed. They wear their hair in a tuft at the forehead which covers the line of parting. This tuft is in the form of a ball or disc; the rest of the hair is drawn back, folded in and held with a brooch at the nape or worn in chignon which protrudes at right angle to the neck or almost vertically upwards. Sometimes a bow of cloth is placed saucily on top of the head, and sometimes a 'relic' or box containing scented sandal or some other perfume paste is secured to the bun by a ribbon. At other times, a band or diadem, or a twisted cord or scarf is tied around the head and over the bun.

Ratnavali, a jewelled net, and brooches and decorative hairpins continued to be worn. Turbans wound around the foreign pointed Scythic cap made of striped fabrics and decorated with rows of pearls or a diadem were frequently used. A sprig of the *mimosa* tree tucked into the turban was said to give protection against the evil eye. If one from the *asoka* tree was worn, it was said to symbolize love. There is little evidence of long hair being worn loose, but when arranged it was usually in one or two plaits, sometimes joined at the tips at the back, or hanging to one side. The commoner would probably wear hers in a simple knot at the nape as is worn today.

Flowers were used to decorate the hair and chaplets of leaves are frequently seen around the high top knot of hair, especially in north-western India. The chaplet of leaves, made of *nard* leaves on fabric, or else of silk of many colours and steeped in ungents, was even exported to Rome. But *srajas* or flower garlands were the most popular and could be of many kinds, worn at the waist, neck, or in the hair. They were sometimes supported by *munja* grass, reeds, or cotton-plant stalks. Apart from flowers, peacock feathers, horn and bone ornaments, shells, leaves, and fruit and berries were woven together to form decorative ornaments.

Headgear and Hairstyles: Men

Men continued to wear the turban, now called *mauli*, as in the Mauryan–Sunga period. However, a simpler line of twisted rolls of the fabric itself is more in evidence with hardly any of the complications of intertwining the hair with the turban cloth. The knob at the centre or side of the head around which the turban was wound to form a large protuberance, slowly disappeared. When bare-headed, the hair was worn in a top knot or in the shape of a bow, often softened by curls on the forehead or at the nape especially in the north-west. Fillets or bands tied on the forehead were common. Young men had begun to cut their hair short and adopted a short-skirted tunic with their *antariya.* The Scythian pointed cap was frequently used as was the crown or *mukuta.* The common man moved around bare-headed or used his *kayabandh* or *uttariya* to form a casual turban on the head against the sun in almost the same way as is seen today in India.

Jewellery

In relation to the Mauryan–Sunga period, we notice a tendency towards greater refinement and simplicity in this period. Gold was much in use and was called *hiranya* and *suvarna,* silver was known as *rupya,* and copper as *tamra,* and these continued to be used for making jewellery. Gold and silver were often encrusted with *ratna* or jewels. These included cornelians, agates, lapis-lazuli, amethysts, garnets, coral, and pearls. Sapphires, topaz, diamonds and cat's-eyes were embedded or sometimes strung in various ways and worn as ornaments.

Besides this, the art of enamelling was known, as well as inlay work in shell and mother-of-pearl. Gold beads were beautifully filigreed or filled with lac, while others had cores of jasper and turquoise paste and were strung on thread or wire to be worn as short necklaces called *kantha,* or long ones worn between the breasts known as *hara.* Stringing coins to be worn as necklaces, called *nishka,* was in vogue. The torque, a simple necklace of gold wire, was worn by foreigners. It was a characteristic ornament of the Scythian and Celtic people and was worn as a mark of distinction by the Persian and Parthians, all of whom were of the same stock, as were the Sakas and Kushans. Shell and terracotta beads continued to be strung and worn by the poorer classes.

The earrings, *kundala*, were of three types and most often of gold though there is evidence of ivory ones as well. The pendant type often had decorative rosettes and granulation. The ring type, Scythian in origin, could be simple with a gold wire wound around or a mixture of both types, that is, a ring elaborately decorated with beads as well as bud-like pendants. Of these, the simpler kind was used by men, except for foreigners who are depicted as wearing none. Armlets were known as *keyura* and bracelets as *valaya*. These were worn by both men and women. Those for women were often made of thick or thin sheets of gold with hinged clasps, and elaborately ornamented and inlaid. Simple bangles of glass, shell, or ivory were also used.

Head ornaments were varied. As the turbans and head veils of women went out of fashion they were replaced by a bejewelled diadem or crown called *mukuta*, or a simple fillet or head band called *opasa*. These were used in addition to the garlands of flowers, *sraja*, which remained popular. Hair was held up by gold or silver hairpins with attractively ornamented heads. Men continued to wear the *mauli* (turban). The *mekhala* or girdle was mainly of beads and, along with the *nupura* or anklet, was worn only by women. This was simpler and lighter than that in the previous period. There is an absence of forehead ornaments like the *sitara* and *bindi* of the Mauryan–Sunga period.

Finger rings were of solid gold, some plain, others incised with tiny figures. Ivory was used extensively to make combs, brooches, hairpins, boxes, and other objects.

Military Costume

It is in the military dress of the Mauryan–Sunga period that we find the earliest traces of foreign influence on indigenous garments. At the Gandhara site of the Kushans is a soldier of Mara's (Apollo's) army wearing the Indian *antariya* and turban with a Graeco-Roman style of breast-plate or coat of mail. Coats of mail are said to have been made indigenously of metallic wires, probably iron, woven into a gauze known as *jalaka*. But the soldier's coat of mail appears to be made of metal scales, attached to a backing, rather than woven wire. This could be a foreign-influenced improvement on the indigenous equipment for soldiers. Another soldier is seen wearing full foreign garments in the same army. His coat of mail is worn over a short tunic which is visible at the hem and sleeves, and his bare legs are encased in greaves. On his head is a three-cornered helmet which suggests the well-known whitish grey felt caps of the Tibetans and Khorezmians.

Khorez, Bactria, and Sogdiania in Central Asia, had at one time been some of the most important cultural centres of the ancient world. They were later taken over by the Persians, Greeks, and then the Kushans. The third soldier in this army of Mara wears the purely Indian *antariya* and has his *uttariya* wound around his waist. All three soldiers carry shields and equipment of various kinds. Foot soldiers are said to have used six-foot bows with very long arrows, tall shields made of undressed ox hide, and broad swords three cubits long. Some carried javelins instead of bows. Horsemen carried smaller shields and were equipped with two lances each, but rode without saddles.

Religious Persons

Brahmin hermits or ascetics continued to wear garments made of bark leaves, or animal skins, and live austere lives in forests or other isolated places. The clothes of the *bhikshu* continued to be yellow or red in colour and consisted of the same *antaravasaka, uttarasanga, samghati*, and *kushalaka* as before, along with a buckled belt or *samkaksika*. Only now the cloth of their garments was most probably donated to the monastery by wealthy merchants, and was not made of rags. The sign of physical and spiritual perfection in the Buddha figures is the protuberance or *ushnisa* on the head which evolved from the top knot worn by Brahmins. Another symbol is the *urna* or tuft of hair between the eyebrows, representing the third eye. The elongated ear lobes are yet another sign of perfection.

Textiles and Dyes

For the first time trade with China was directly established through the ancient silk route. Indian traders settled down in Chinese Turkestan, which was annexed by Kanishka, the Kushan king. This included Kashgar, Khotan, and Yarkhand. Buddhist missions too were sent to China. In Rome, Augustus encouraged trade with India and exports increased resulting in a flourishing merchant class. In the north-western area coarse cotton and wool were used for making tunics and trousers for horsemen, hunters, foreigners, and doorkeepers. In central India textiles were of light-weight cotton, *tulapansi*. Both indigenous and foreign silks were plentiful but still very expensive.

Antariyas were very rarely decorated and when they were, they appear to have been either embroidered, woven, or printed in diagonal check designs enclosing small circles. Turban cloth for rich women was often diagonally striped with every third line made of pearls. This bejewelled material was also used to cover beds and seats. Many other geometric patterns of checks, stripes and triangles were also printed and woven. It is only from literary sources that we know of the textiles and dyes available in the earlier period. There is no evidence of actual fabrics being made in India before the twelveth or thirteenth century. But a large variety of fabrics were recovered from the burial grounds along the silk route, which can be dated to between the first century B.C. and the second century A.D. (Han Period in China). Based on this evidence we may presume that the dyes and textiles of Chinese origin available along this route would surely have found their way into India. Hence, it is possible to maintain that many of the patterns and colours would be similar, or had influenced indigenous fabrics. We know for a fact that the beautiful ultra-marine and lapis-lazuli blue were sent along the trade routes from the famous mines at Badakshan in Central Asia. There is, in addition, much literary evidence of the sophistication of Indian textiles from the earliest times.

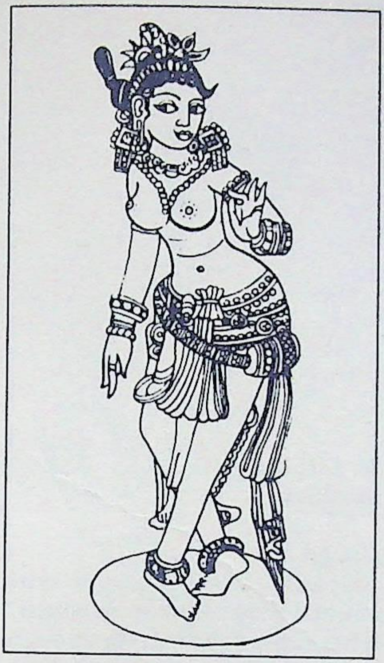
In a list compiled of the fabrics recovered from the ancient silk route, fabrics in the following colours were found: bright blue, rich blue, light blue, dark blue-copper, dull gold-buff, bronze-brown, dark brown, pale brown, snuff brown, myrtle green, green, dark bronze-green, crimson, pink, crimson-brown, rich red, yellow, yellow-brown, yellow-green, rich dark yellow-brown. These are all variants and mixtures of the colours in dyes that were available in India in this period.

Style

The Kushan influence was felt in what developed into the Gandhara art and the art of Mathura which, while retaining the massive scale of Bharut and Sanchi, had carvings more sophisticated and images more flamboyant and sensuous than had been seen before. It is as if in the provocative display of courtesans with their sinuous bodies in the *tribhanga* pose and the delicate flower-like gesture of the hands, the foreigners had found aspects of the Indian experience that fired their imagination.

In the same period, however, there are the wall paintings at Kizil in Afghanistan, where the wiry line of the drawing with its flat brilliant colours dominated by lapis-lazuli gives a heraldic appearance, static and frozen, like the group of portrait statues found at Mathura. The latter have the still, formal depiction of the Kushan kings, showing in complete detail the kind of heavy garments they wore. The Kushans were not originally an artistic people. Of Scythian origin, their only expression had been the metal work displayed in their horse trappings, hunting gear, and in the ornamental plaques which they stitched on their garments.

But they had lived for many years in Bactria before entering India and this prepared them for the role they were to play as great patrons of the arts, as seen in the development of the Gandhara art and the evolution of the indigenous art of Mathura. Later, both these styles fused to create the Renaissance of Gupta Art.



35. COURT LADY
(Begram)

Antariya
worn extremely short in the *kachcha* style; the end that is passed between the legs has been tucked in at the back; the other piece is looped to mid-thigh in front and the end tucked in a small looped frill at the centre

Kayabandh
there are two: one is a wide sash tied in a loop on both sides to the knees with steamers at each side of the hips hanging to floor length; the other is the *kakshyabandha*, a thick jewelled roll worn aslant which has a large clasp at the left hip

Mekhala
five-stringed pearl or jewelled hip belt, it holds the *antariya* and cloth *kayabandh* in place

Hara
necklace of pearls, probably strung on thread or wire and worn between the breasts

Kantha
short necklace of beads with central pendant and looped chains

Keyura
simple armlets, of looped design, in gold or silver

Valaya
bracelets of two kinds: the central one consists of a series of rings like a wrist band; on both sides are larger rigid bracelets

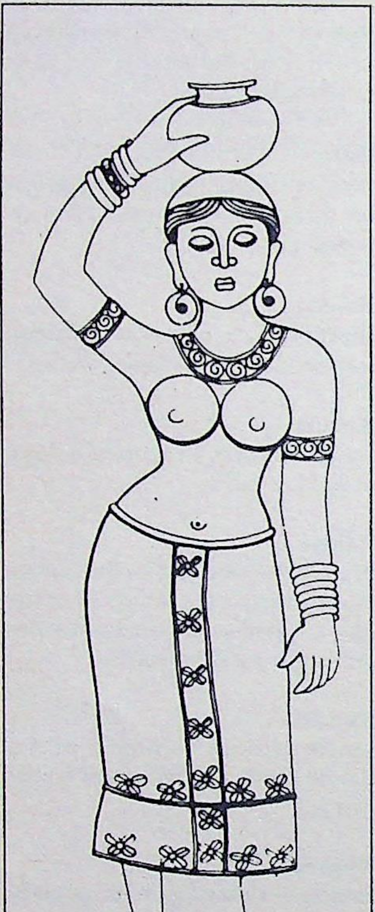
Kundala
square earrings decorated with a flower motif and with pearls suspended

Nupura
anklets—wide rings with an elaborate design

Anguliya
finger rings of solid gold

Mukuta
bejewelled crown on the head and a head band

Hairstyle
small symmetrical curls at the forehead, hair tied in a looped knot projecting vertically at the back



36. MILK MAID

(Mathura)

Ghagri
simple narrow calf-length skirt stitched at the centre-front border, it has either a drawstring through it or is rolled over a string; this is an example of the earliest form of a stitched lower garment for women

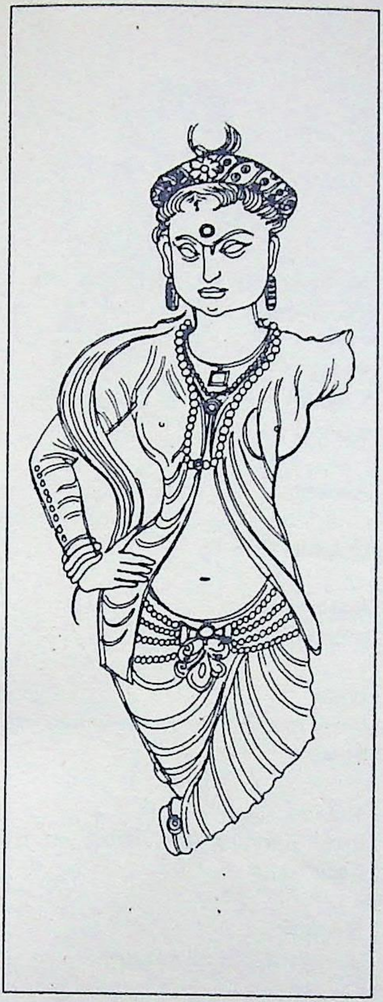
Kantha
short flat necklace with decorative design

Keyura
armlets of same decorative design as for *kantha*

Valaya
simple ring-type bangles

Kundala
simple ring-type earrings

She rests her pitcher on a head-rest probably of cane, like an inverted basket.



37. YAKSHI: FEMALE DOOR-KEEPER

(Gandhara)

Antariya
worn in *lehnga* style, simply wrapped around and tucked in at the left

Uttariya
thrown casually over the shoulders

Tunic
with front opening, held at the neck by button; long ruched sleeves have ruching held by jewelled bands or buttons; tunic is fork-length and form-fitting

Mekhala
four-stringed girdle with clasp and decorative leaf at the centre

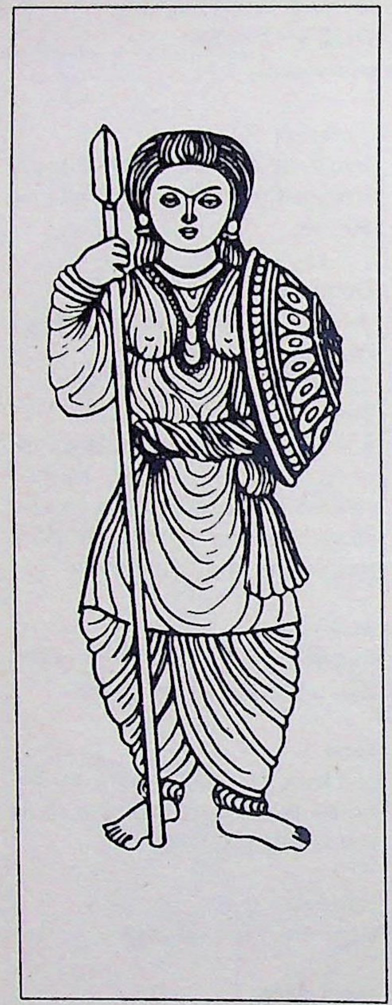
Hara
one long pearl necklace worn between the breasts and one short one with a pendant

Kundala
large ring-type earrings

Head-dress
chaplet of leaves or turban with a central flower worn around the top knot of hair

Sitara
round ornament on the forehead

Mixture of foreign and indigenous costume.



38. FEMALE GUARD

(Gandhara)

Tunic
Kushạn type with long ruched sleeves

Antariya
could be *chalana*—Kushan loose trousers

Kayabandh
twisted sash

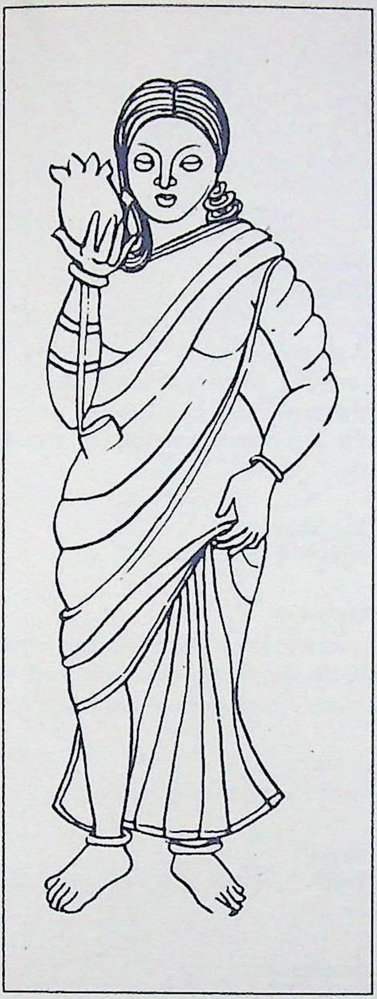
Hara
long necklet worn between the breasts

Valaya
three bangles are visible on the right hand

Nupura
heavy ring-type anklets

Hairstyle
hair at the front is divided into three portions, the central one is made into a roll, the two at the side are combed downwards with tassels suspended

She carries a long spear and round embossed shield. A mixture of foreign and indigenous costume.



39. DONOR FIGURE

(Mathura)

Antariya
sari-like, tied in front, while one end is passed between the legs, pleated and tucked in at the back, the other end is partly pleated and tucked in at the front, then wound around and worn over the left shoulder

Tunic
Kushan style with ruched long sleeves either tucked into *antariya* or worn short to waist

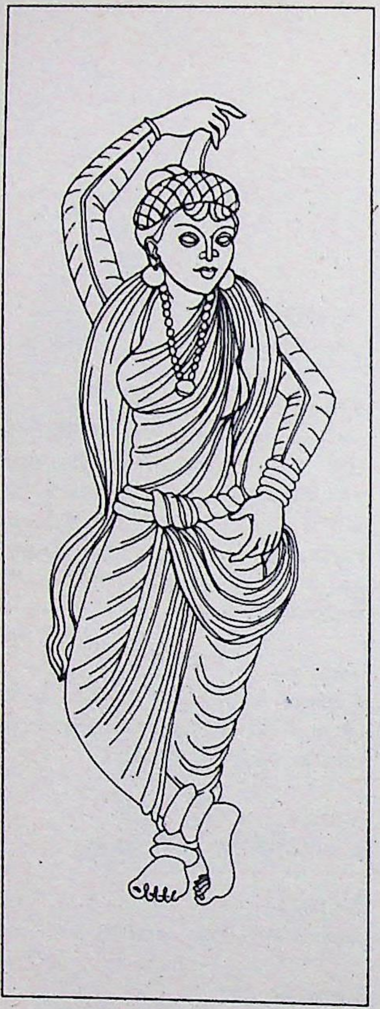
Valaya
one bangle on each wrist

Nupura
simple ring-type anklets

Kundala
twisted or suspended disc earrings

Hairstyle
centre parting with long hair looped on one side

Mixture of foreign and indigenous costume. This early form of kachcha-style sari is still used in Maharashtra and parts of South India.



40. FEMALE

(Gandhara)

Antariya
sari-like, worn in the *kachcha* style, the other end being taken across the body and over the left shoulder

Kayabandh
simple sash, twisted in parts

Uttariya
worn across the back and over both shoulders, the left end is loosely tucked in at the waist

Valaya
four bangles on left wrist

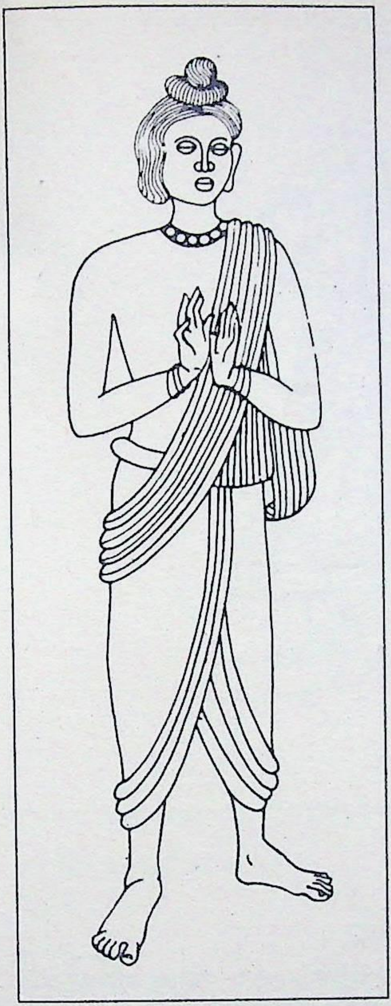
Hara
pearl necklace worn between the breasts

Kundala
simple disc-like earrings

Nupura
heavy double rings on the ankles

Hairstyle
chaplet of leaves

Mixture of foreign and indigenous costume.



41. DONOR FIGURE
(Gandhara)

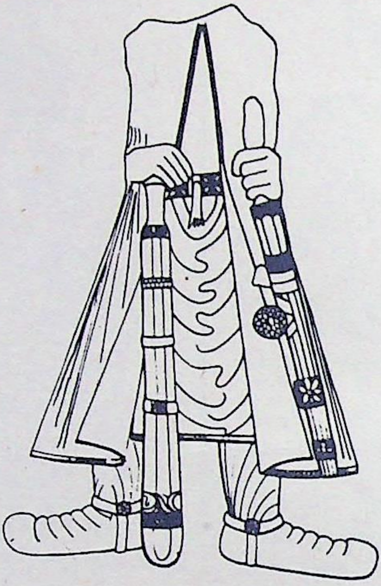
Antariya
kachcha style, only the pleated end hanging at the back has been shortened

Uttariya
worn over the left shoulder across the back and under the right arm, then across the chest and taken again over the left shoulder

Kantha
short necklace

Hairstyle
in a double knot at the centre of the head

Purely indigenous style.



42. KING KANISHKA
(Mathura)

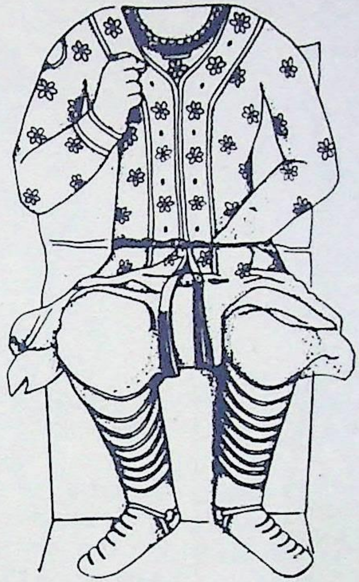
Tunic
calf-length and heavily quilted, with braid at the bottom edge

Chugha
a coat which is longer than the tunic, worn open at centre front; it has a decorative braid at the centre front and hem with probably long gathered-up sleeves

Belt
of metallic decorative plaques

Boots
padded, with straps around the ankle and under the boot held together by a decorative clasp; either the boots are calf length or baggy trousers (*chalana*) have been inserted into short boots

This is the dress of the Kushan foreigners of Saka-Parthian origin. He holds two swords in decorative scabbards.



43. KUSHAN KING
(Mathura)

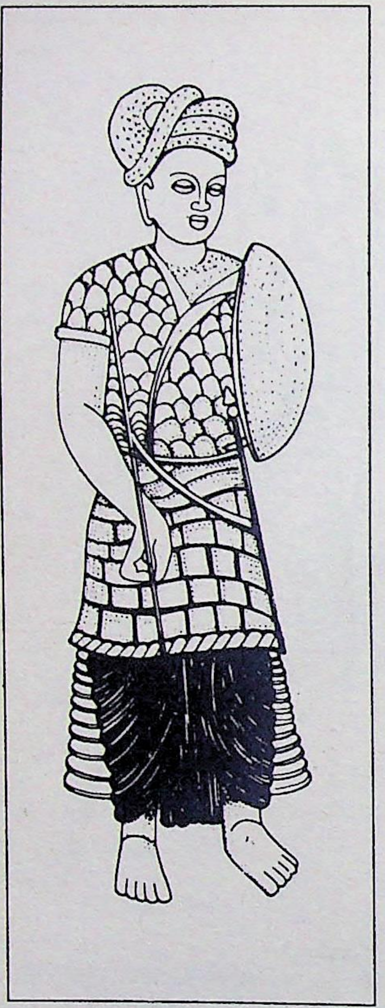
Chugha
calf-length with a wide richly embroidered border down the centre-front opening, hem and edge of long sleeves (probably ruched); the material of the coat has small rosettes and a V-neck and there is a round motif on the right sleeve

Tunic
kurta-like undergarment visible at the neck

Chalana
baggy trousers tucked into calf-length padded boots; there is a wide band of vine pattern at the centre from toe to top (not visible in drawing); straps around the ankle and instep

Kantha
short necklace with pendant

Purely foreign costume of Scythic origin.



44. SOLDIER
(Gandhara)

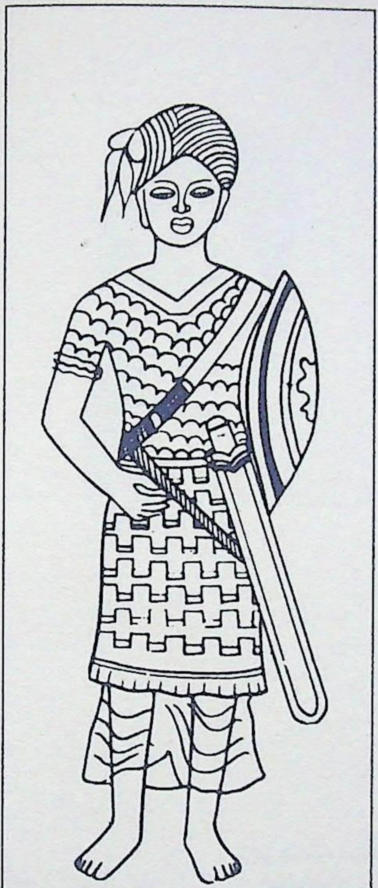
Antariya
worn in *kachcha* style

Armour
chain armour made of scale or rhombus-patterned plaques, fastened together with strings (like a Japanese or Tibetan armour); the end of the sleeves, waist and hem are strengthened with cording; the skirt portion is made of parallel rows of rectangular plaques

Mauli
turban made of twisted roll of cloth

Equipment
round shield and spear

This is a mixture of foreign and indigenous costume. The armour is Graeco-Roman.



45. SOLDIER
(Gandhara)

Antariya
transparent calf-length and worn in the *lehnga* style

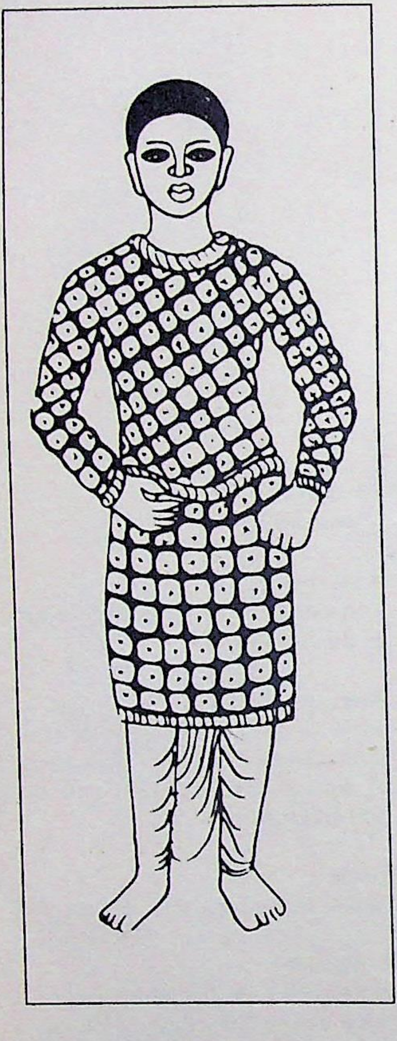
Armour
scale armour with V-neck and short sleeves; the skirt portion is of square-linked design and of mid-thigh length

Tunic
visible at the hem and sleeves

Equipment
sword belt with flat, short sword; strap across the chest, probably for quiver; round shield with patterned design

Mauli
turban wound several times and tied at the right side

Mixture of foreign and indigenous costume.

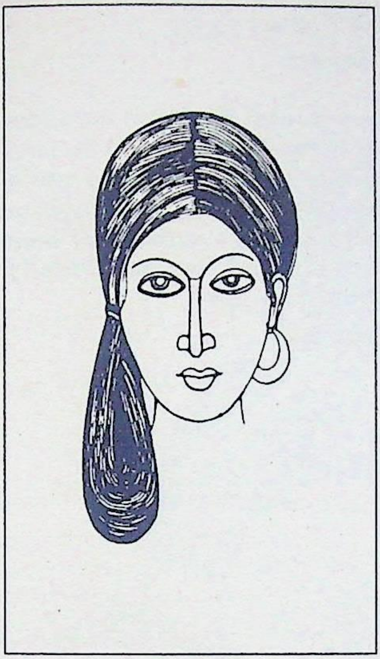


46. GUARD
(Gandhara)

Antariya
worn in *kachcha* style up to the ankles

Tunic
knee-length, a fully quilted garment with thick cording at the waist, neck and hem

Quilted upper garments are still worn in north India in winter. Mixture of foreign and indigenous costume.



47. FEMALE COURT ATTENDANT

(Mathura)

this simple hairstyle is made by parting the hair at the centre, drawing it to the right side and allowing it to hang in a loop at the right shoulder

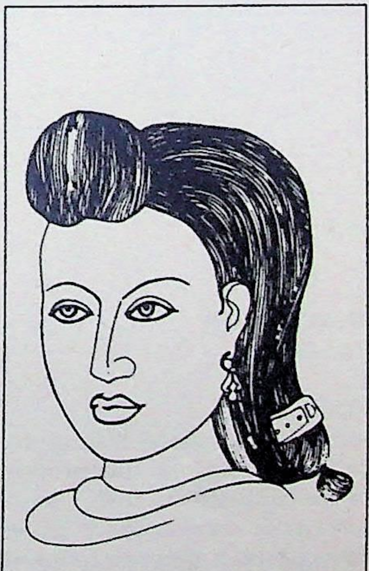
↵

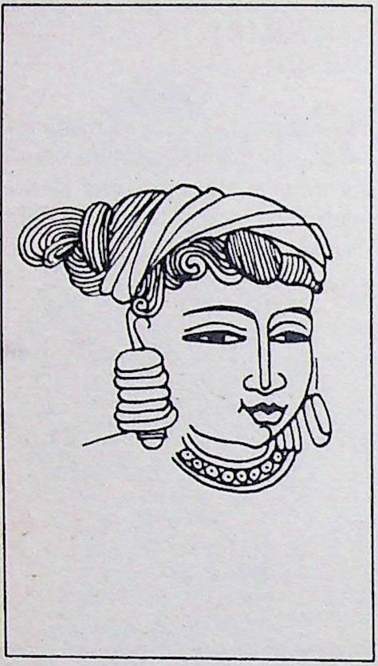
48. COURT LADY

(Mathura)

a tuft of hair covers the line of parting; it has been wound to form a ball; rest of the hair is drawn back, looped and held in position by a clip or brooch

This hairstyle, fairly common in this period, seems foreign influenced as it is not seen in earlier periods, particularly the tuft of hair at centre front. ↪





49. COURT LADY

(Begram)

hair is worn in a tuft at the centre as in Fig. 48, curls frame the face; rest of the hair is drawn into a knot which is vertically placed at back centre; a turban has been twisted and wound casually around the hair

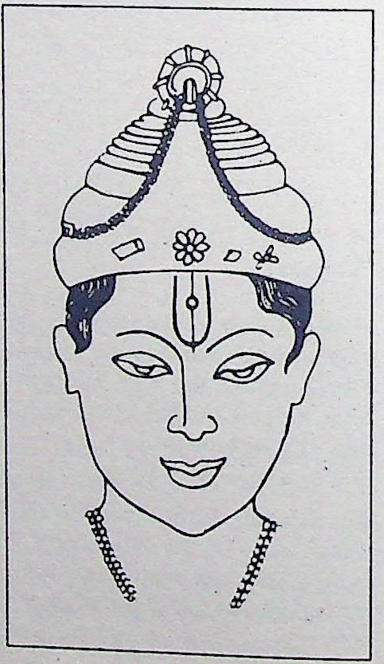
↲

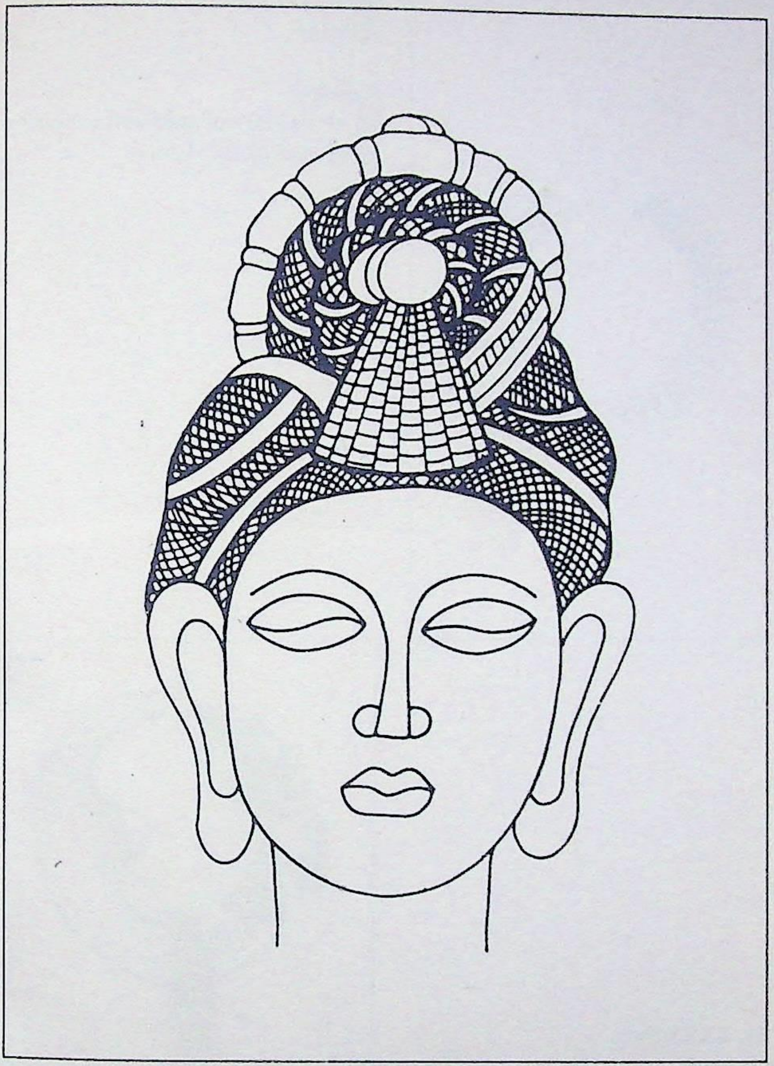
50. COURTIER

(Gandhara)

Mauli

turban worn simpler than in the previous period: no intertwining of the hair with the cloth; decorated with some clasps in front; there is also a decorative ring at the top through which a string of pearls is passed and attached to the sides ↳

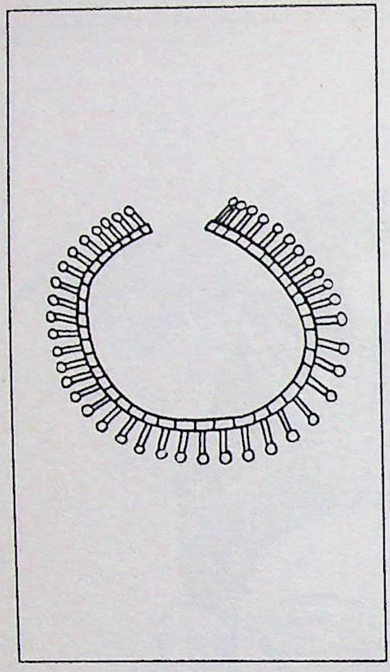




51. DONOR FIGURE
(Mathura)

Mauli

turban of rich material is surmounted by twisted rolls of cloth from the centre of which the pleated end is visible in a decorative fan shape; a band is used crosswise to give shape to the turban



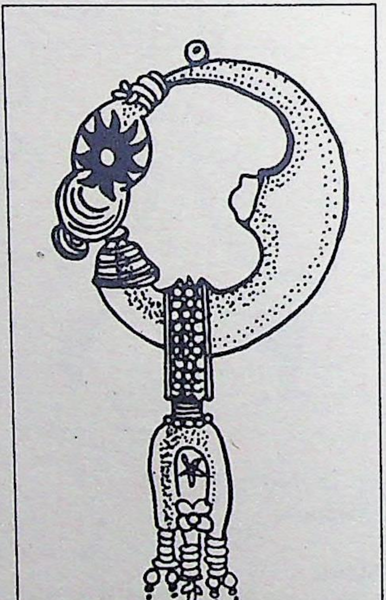
52. NECKLACE

(Taxila)

Kantha

short necklace of gold in the 'spear-head and drop' design

←┘



53. EARRING

(Taxila)

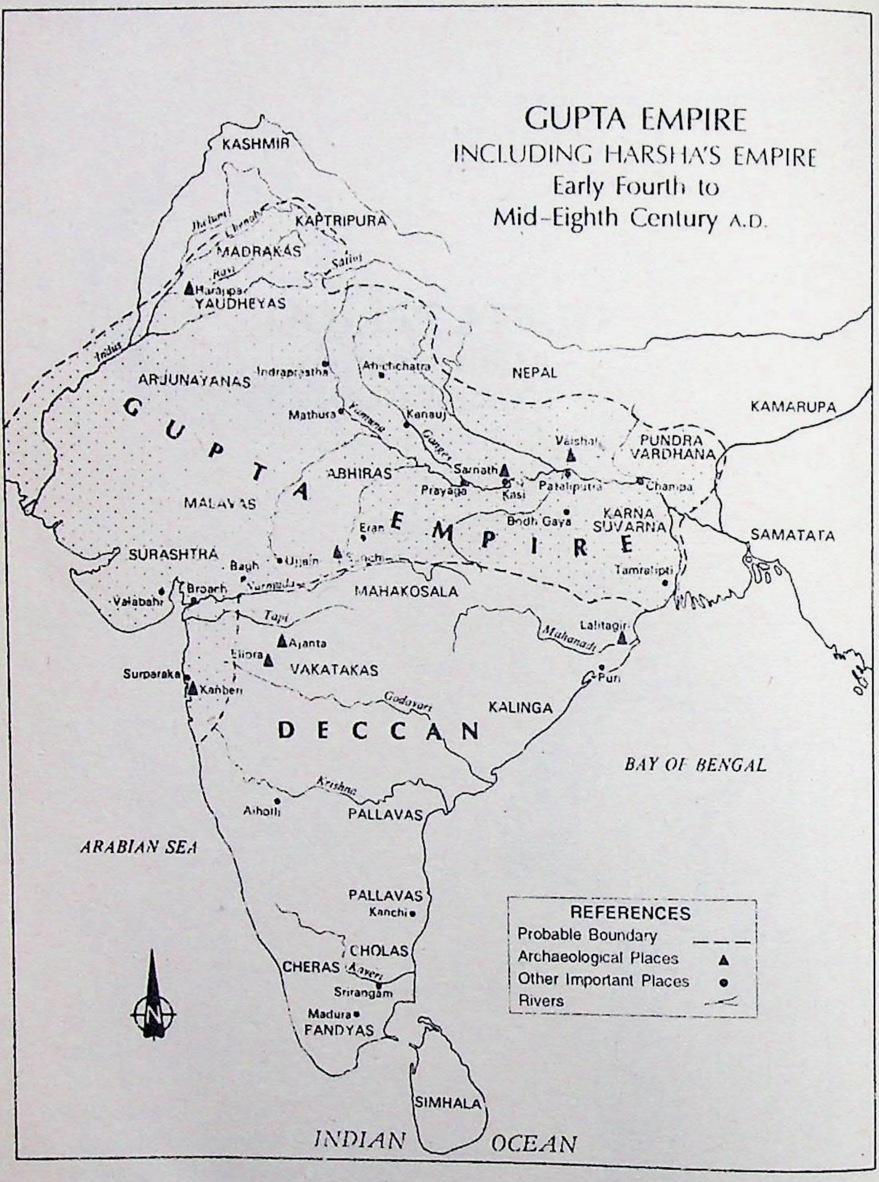
Kundala

of gold 'leech and pendant' type; the ring or leech attaches itself to the ear and the pendant bud is suspended by a movable ring with granulations

└→

GUPTA PERIOD

(EARLY FOURTH
TO MID-EIGHTH
CENTURY A.D.)



GUPTA EMPIRE
INCLUDING HARSHA'S EMPIRE
Early Fourth to
Mid-Eighth Century A.D.

KASHMIR
Jhelum
Chenab
KAPTRIPURA
MADRAKAS
Ravi
Satluj
Harappa
YAUDHEYAS
Indus
ARJUNAYANAS
Indraprastha
Ahichchatra
NEPAL
KAMARUPA
G U P T A
Mathura
Yamuna
Kanauj
Ganges
Vaishali
PUNDRA VARDHANA
ABHIRAS
Sarnath
Prayaga
Kasi
Pataliputra
Champa
MALAVAS
Eran
E M P I R E
Bodh Gaya
KARNA SUVARNA
SAMATATA
SURASHTRA
Bagh
Ujjain
Sanchi
Tamralipti
Valabahi
Broach
Narmada
MAHAKOSALA
Tapi
Lalitagiri
Mahanadi
Ajanta
Ellora
VAKATAKAS
Puri
Surparaka
Kanheri
Godavari
KALINGA
D E C C A N
BAY OF BENGAL
Krishna
Aiholli
PALLAVAS
ARABIAN SEA
PALLAVAS
Kanchi
CHOLAS
CHERAS
Kaveri
Srirangam
Madura
FANDYAS
SIMHALA
INDIAN
OCEAN
N
REFERENCES
Probable Boundary
Archaeological Places ▲
Other Important Places ●
Rivers

GUPTA PERIOD

(EARLY FOURTH TO MID-EIGHTH CENTURY A.D.)

Main archaeological sites of interest for costumes

- Ajanta Frescoes
- Bagh Frescoes
- Ahichchatra (Rohilkhand)

History and Social Life

The Gupta empire was founded in northern India at the beginning of the fourth century A.D. after a long period of chaos which ensued when the Kushan empire ended in the middle of the third century. In the interim period a number of new peoples and states emerged about whom there is very little historical record. It was only with the foundation of the Gupta empire, that there was once again unity and peace over almost the whole of north India.

The Gupta empire lasted for more than two centuries and was vast: it stretched over the major part of north India and to Balkh in the east. In the west, the Guptas totally defeated the foreign invaders, the Sakas, who had been ruling Gujarat for more than 200 years. Known as the 'Golden Age' and the 'Classical Period', in the age of the Guptas a degree of balance and harmony in all the arts and an efficient system of administration was achieved.

Fa-Hein, a Chinese Buddhist monk who travelled in India, wrote an account of his travels in which he noted the peacefulness of India, the rarity of serious crimes, and the benevolence of the administration. Vegetarianism was practiced by most Indians, except the lowest castes and untouchables. Hinduism was widespread although Buddhism still flourished.

Chronologically, the Gupta period includes the reign of Harsha of Kanauj (A.D. 606-647) who revived the glory of the empire after the invasions of the White Huns. Neither Harsha nor the Guptas had ever been able to conquer the south, where the Pallavas and Chalukyas took over from the Satavahanas. With the Kushans there had been a great deal of influence from the western world because of the dominance of the Roman empire, but now that the latter had collapsed, India was more isolated and purely Indian ideals were being expressed and even exported to the Far East and South Asia where more contacts had been made through trade and religion.

In the Deccan, it was the Vakatakas and not the Guptas who ruled from the first half of the fifth century to the seventh century, and after them the Chalukya king Pulakesin II (A.D. 609-642) came to power. This region and period has been included under the section of Gupta costume, for by this time the standard Gupta costume had penetrated into the Deccan and most of north India.

In the previous periods, evidence of costume was derived mainly from sculptures, but in this period the wall paintings of Ajanta most vividly mirror contemporary life and dress.

Costume : Men

In this period there was a marked preference for the stitched garment, as compared to any previous age, and clearly defined garments for north India and the Deccan began to emerge, which later crystallized into the garment preference we see in India today. With the Kushans, the stitched garment had gained in status and it was now linked to royalty, for the Kushan kings and their nobles had ruled a large part of India and Central Asia for more than a 100 years. The Gupta kings realized the value of adopting a dress that had traditionally become identified with royalty. They are shown on Gupta coins in full Kushan dress, that is, the coat, trousers and boots. They continued, however, to wear the indigenous *antariya*, *uttariya* and *kayabandh* for informal occasions.

Many forms of cut-and-sewn garments became fashionable, especially at court. These garments were not totally foreign to the Indians. Changes had been occurring gradually and the indigenous *kancuka*, associated with guardians and attendants of the harem in earlier times, probably inspired the brocaded tunic with long or short sleeves worn by ministers, guards, door-keepers, and court attendants. Just as often is seen a simpler version, the white calf-length tunic which the chamberlain wore, a *chaddar* adding dignity to his attire. The lower garment was usually the *antariya* and with it was sometimes worn the *kancuka* which could be tucked in like a shirt. The *kayabandh* was used to hold the garment in place. The *ushnisa* (turban) was slowly becoming obsolete, and was now associated mainly with certain dignitaries, ministers and other officials.

Foreigners at court were a common sight as trade and commercial intercourse between India and Persia in this period was at its height. Persia's influence on Indian art is most clearly seen in the rich floating ribbon decoration which was in fashion at the Persian court of Khusrau II (A.D. 600).

In northern India where climatic conditions were more suitable, there was greater emphasis on the stitched garments, but in the south, as is apparent even today, the indigenous *antariya*, *uttariya* and *kayabandh* held their own. Strangely enough, although royalty on the Gupta coins is shown wearing the sewn garments of the Kushan kings, in the Ajanta paintings the king and other members of the nobility are still seen in their fine silk or muslin *antariyas*.

The king's costume was most often of striped blue closely woven silk with a floating *uttariya*. Both these garments invariably had woven borders. Instead of the *kayabandh* a plain cord or belt became more popular, wound once or twice around and then buckled or knotted in a variety of ways to secure the *antariya*. Sometimes the *uttariya* itself was twisted thickly and worn aslant the waist with a large knot at the left hip on which the hand could rest, or it was casually thrown over the left shoulder. It was the elaborate *mukuta* (crown) and exquisite jewellery that really set apart kings and high dignitaries from other members of the royal entourage. Some scholars believe that these elaborate *mukuta* were never actually used, but were merely signs of divinity or royalty.

Costume : Women

In the case of male costume it is easier to trace the influence, which came mainly from the invaders and traders. In female costume, however, the variety is much greater and hence it is more difficult to pin-point the exact sources.

The *antariya* which was 18–36 inches wide and 4–8 yards long was worn in several different ways. The short or long *antariya* was worn in the *kachcha* style or as a *lehnga*, in which case it was first wrapped around the right hip then around the body and tucked in at the left hip. It was drawn very tight across the hips accentuating their curve most seductively, and was normally calf length. Another form of the *antariya* was worn in the *kachcha* and *lehnga* styles together. This was usually a very short *antariya* only up to mid-thigh called the *calanika*. It was drawn up first in the *kachcha* style, the longer end of the three-yard long material was then wrapped around like a short *lehnga*. A common form was a skimpy *antariya* made of cheap linen worn mainly by the lower classes. Normally the ankle-length *antariya* was worn by the nobility and women of high rank, attendants usually wore the shorter form. But in all cases it was tied under the navel and supported by the hip bones.

The *antariya* was occasionally worn like the Indonesian sarong—a wide garment reaching from under the armpits to mid-thigh in a simple wraparound fashion. The main difference in the Gupta period, as distinct from the previous periods, is that the *kachcha* style became less popular with women, being replaced gradually by the more feminine *lehnga* or *lungi* as we call it today, although the queen and other ladies of the royal family remained conservative. This conservative *kachcha* style is still adopted by the women of Maharashtra and South India.

The skirt, *bhairnivasani,* evolved from the *antariya* which when stitched on one side became tubular and was worn gathered together at the waist, and held by a girdle. This was one of the earliest forms of a clumsily stitched skirt and used as early as the Early Bronze period by the Germanic race. The *bhairnivasani* was first used by the Jain and Buddhist nuns, and arose from the idea that a woman's body was sinful and had to be covered. Also, the *kachcha* and the *lehnga* styles were considered too seductive as they entailed the *antariya* to be pulled tightly across the hips. With the Jain sect in particular, an extraordinary amount of clothing was worn by the nuns to completely hide the shape of the female form. From the *bhairnivasani* evolved the skirt with the drawstring or *nada,* called the *ghagri*. The *ghagri* was a narrow skirt six feet long—the same length as the original *antariya*. It was worn mainly by village women, and was very attractive since the border of the cloth was used vertically in the centre to decorate it.

A heavily gathered skirt, an elaboration on the *ghagri* probably introduced by foreigners, is also seen. It seems to be mainly used by dancers, so that the swirling effect is enhanced by its many folds which may have been gored. This skirt is still worn by many rural peoples, including the Lambadi and Banjara gypsies of India.

Women wore *langoti* type of drawers, the *ardhoruka,* which had evolved from the needs of modesty. This was a short strip of cloth worn around the waist with an attached piece from the centre of the waist, which was drawn up between the legs and tucked in behind. Like the *bhairnivasani* this too was an early garment originally used by women ascetics. Jain nuns wore four of these *ardhorukas* one on top of another, something like the medieval 'chastity belt'.

It would be interesting to find a satisfactory answer as to why, at this particular juncture, Indian women frequently began to clothe the top half of their bodies. For many centuries before, they had moved around unselfconsciously nude above the waist. There were probably two reasons. One was that the female attendants in the king's court, thrown into the company of beautiful foreigners who wore upper garments, must have realized that covering the bosom could be even more attractive than exposing it, and accordingly emulated the dress style of the foreigners. Also, with the impact of Buddhism, Jainism, and Christianity the belief that the body was sinful and must be concealed to avoid temptation was percolating through India. In medieval Europe, around this time, similar changes were occurring in female clothing, and women began covering themselves from head to foot.

The breast-band had been used since Vedic times, as with the Greeks, mainly as a support for the breasts rather than to cover them. There was in addition to the breast-band, an indigenous stitched garment known as *cholaka, chola, choli, cholika,* and *kancholika,* which is mentioned in early Sanskrit literature. The primitive *choli* was cut very simply from a square piece of cloth, with a slit for the neck. This was also the early form used as protection by the women of the Germanic or Teutonic races in the Early Bronze age. This evolution from the unstitched to the stitched garment had an inescapable logic as it evolved for purely functional purposes. In the case of the Germanic races it was protection from the cold, and in India it served the purpose of modesty.

A further development of the *choli* was the fold back at the bottom edge and the introduction of strings, attached to make it backless, very like the garment worn today by women in Rajasthan and elsewhere. The apron-like attachment at the front of the *choli*, visible in some of the frescoes, could have evolved from the need for protection against the cold for the front part of the body, as the back was normally covered by the head-veil, or as a modest covering over the stomach which was exposed, the skirt or *lehnga* being worn below the navel. Here again the back was covered by the head-veil.

Another *choli* which ends just above the waist is made of diaphanous material and seen particularly in the dress of princesses and other royal ladies. This *choli* appears to be fastened in front, probably knotted, as is the case with certain *cholis* in use today. This would cover the back completely, but expose most of the midriff in front. The Persian shirt or *kurta*, with its side-opening at the neck, slit sides and four-poted hemline had become thoroughly Indianised and was commonly used even by women. Another style of the *kurta* was with crossover flaps and side-opening in the *angarkha* style. Ankle-length fitted tunics in brocade still appear foreign and may have been a Turanian Tartar (a nomadic race of Mongolian stock from Central Asia) contribution to the fashions at court.

The *uttariya* remained, but was worn very sheer and more as a flattering accessory, rather than as the substantial article of clothing it had once been. It is normally seen in Ajanta, delicately wafting behind, like the floating ribbon decoration which was also in fashion at the Persian court at this time.

Headgear and Hairstyles

Simple plaits were no longer visible, and hair was so elaborately dressed at times, that the help of maid-servants who were expert hair-dressers was obviously essential. There seemed to be broadly two styles of foreign origin, while the complicated ways of dressing long hair were mainly derived from south Indian and Deccani styles. The latter became extremely popular in the Gupta age. The use of *missi* to darken the gums and lips, and henna to redden the palm and soles of the feet was fairly prevalent.

Of foreign origin was the short hair which was sometimes frizzed in front with luxuriant ringlets quite unlike anything seen today, or just left hanging loose to the shoulders or lower, held by a fillet or a chaplet of flowers.

The indigenous style showed itself in long hair worn in a bun either high or low on the neck or knotted at the side of the head, or with the coil wound on the left on top of the head. The bun itself was sometimes a simple tight knot, at other times in the shape of the figure eight, or large and loosely wound, but almost always surrounded by flowers or had large lotus blossoms tucked into it. In addition, there could be a, *ratnajali,* jewelled net or a net of pearls called *muktajala*, worn over the bun.

Tiaras were often used with short or long hair, and pearl strings could define the parting of the hair as could a jewelled band. Fillets both simple and elaborate were commonly used to hold back short hair. Turbans too had not disappeared completely and women wore them very effectively, sometimes made of brocade or striped material, and completely covering the hair.

The profuse use of flowers cannot be overemphasized in this period. Besides surrounding the bun they were used as tiaras, and in as many ways to dress the hair as could conceivably be imagined by the women wearing them. In the Deccan, hair styles of the lower classes (even those belonging to the menial orders) or the peasant women could be as elaborate as those of the higher-class women.

For men, a tiara or crown with a band inset with pearls and sometimes festooned with garlands replaced the turban. This slowly became more common for the king when informally dressed in indigenous garments; attendants wore this as well with shoulder-length hair. On the Gupta coins, however, the king is shown in Parthian-Kushan dress and wears a skull cap or helmet as headgear. This latter costume was probably used by the king on formal occasions which required military regalia, or at sports like hunting.

In the royal entourage, the turban continued to be worn by high officials, like the chamberlain, ministers, military officers, civic officials and so on, where it had become a distinctive symbol of their respective ranks. It could be of fine muslin tied over a large knot of hair at the centre of the forehead or a striped turban worn flat and twisted giving a rope-like effect to the cloth when wound. The ministers were often Brahmins with all their hair shorn keeping only the ritual top knot.

Generally, hair was worn loose by men, shoulder-length and curled, in the *gurnakuntala* style, sometimes with a head band to hold it in place, or adorned with a strand of pearls. Very short hair was also fairly common and looked much like the hair worn today except that a clear parting in the hair was seldom visible.

There were, however, fashions in the dressing of men's hair, which was sometimes cut unevenly at the edges, giving the appearance of a wig; at other times the earlier form of a top knot was employed, but in a more decorative manner, using only a portion of the hair, the rest hanging in curls to the shoulder.

Jewellery

Gold or *hirana* was more commonly used than ever before, especially in the Deccan where there were gold mines. Gold ornaments for both men and women were exquisitely made, acquiring a new delicacy as beaten work, filigree work and twisted wire was skilfully combined with jewels—particularly pearls. *Kundala* was the general term for earrings, which were mainly of two types, both of which were circular. One was a large ring type and the other was a button type, *karnaphul*, with a plain or decorated surface. The *bali*, a small gold wire circlet worn on the upper part of the ear with pearls strung on it, or two pearls and one emerald, is still popular. Large ring-type earrings later developed pendants that shook with the movements of the head and were called *kancala-kundala* or 'tremulous earring'.

The *sutra* was a chain for the neck. When made of gold with precious stones in the centre, it was called *hemasutra.* But this was the era of the pearl necklace or *muktavali.* A single strand of small pearls was the *haravsti,* one of big pearls, the *tarahara,* and one with a gem in the centre of the pearl was known as *suddha ekavali.* However, it was the glorious *vijayantika,* a necklace made from a successive series of pearls, rubies, emeralds, blue stones and diamonds, that was most sought after. The *nishka* or coin necklace also continued to be popular.

Upper arm ornaments were known as the *angada* and *keyura,* the former like a coiled snake, and the latter, a cylinder made of filigree work or inset with pearls. Bracelets, *valaya* were generally simple or inset with pearls. Bangles of conch shell or ivory were worn in sets of graded sizes, like those used by primitive and folk people today. Finger rings, *anguliya* were of gold or studded with precious stones, *ratnanguliya*. Tiaras—*kirita* and crown—*mukuta* were worn by men and women of the nobility and were particularly splendid, often having pearls suspended from them so as to delicately surround the face. All the above ornaments were common to both men and women, but there were specific ornaments worn only by women. These were jewelled girdles, anklets, and an attractive ornament of two strings of pearls or flowers, worn crosswise on the chest and back, in the *vaikaksha* style. It was sometimes held by a clasp at the centre. A very provocative garter-like ornament, the *pada-patra,* was sometimes worn by women on the upper part of the thigh. This ornament could be quite decorative with festoons of pearls and other ornamentation.

The *mekhala* or girdle was worn by women quite low on the hips and suspended from the *katisutra*. The latter was probably a string tied at the waist and hidden under the upper edge of the *antariya,* in which it was rolled. The *mekhala* hung in a seductive clasp at the centre from this string, over or under which hung a small pleated frill of cloth. This is still seen in the Bharata Natyam dancer's costume of today. A simple straight belt was used by men to hold the *antariya*, or sometimes above it, which could have a buckle either square, round, rosette-shaped, or rectangular.

On the women's ankles the *kinkini*, with its small bells, tinkled as they moved, or their *nupura* (anklet) could be made from jewelled beads, *maninupura*. Although anklets were worn by women of all classes, they are not seen on the feet of goddesses in sculpture.

Flowers in the form of necklaces, *mala*, were worn on the head, entwined in the hair, and looped around the neck or waist or worn crosswise in garlands on the chest. The *mala* was usually made of fragrant *kadamba* flowers. Kings wore chaplets of white flowers even on military expeditions and officials of state tucked a bunch of flowers into their top knot. Women loved to decorate themselves with flowers as well, and wreaths of scented flowers hung from their ears. Their brows were also adorned with wreaths and heavy garlands of amaranth hung on their hips.

Military Costume

In the previous centuries, except occasionally in the Satavahana age, there was no fixed uniform for the indigenous army. It was the Ḳushan army, well clad and equipped, that became the prototype on which the new military uniform of the Guptas was based. The king himself adopted the Kushan royal costume on formal occasions as a status symbol. In the early period the Gupta soldier had worn the *antariya* with his bare chest inadequately covered by the six jewel-strapped *channavira*. This evolved into the more efficient foreign-influenced *kancuka* with trousers or short drawers, *jhangia*, and high boots, with a helmet or cap, and sometimes a fillet to tie back the hair.

Later the soldier's uniform was either a short- or long-sleeved knee-length tunic, *kancuka*, which had a centre front opening with a V-shaped or round neck. The tunics were sometimes spotted with black aloe wood paste, which could be a type of tie-dye, or *bandhni* as it is known today. This may have been their version of the camouflage on military uniforms. It is possible that these tunics were worn over a brief *antariya*, as the foot soldiers seldom wore trousers to cover their bare legs. Instead of the knee-length *kancuka* a short tight-fitting blouse, *cholaka*, was sometimes worn with the short *antariya*. Around the waist, the *kayabandh* could be wound once or twice, holding a short dagger or curved sword. Shields were curved or rectangular, the former sometimes decorated with a dragon's head. Some soldiers continued to wear only the short *antariya* which was often striped, and with this indigenous garment the wheel-type disc earring were still worn. Head-dresses were normally a simple skull cap or just a scarf or cloth wound around the head like a turban.

The cavalry wore a more elaborate dress, closer in style to the original Parthian-Kushan dress being a mid-calf length quilted coat with long ruched sleeves. With this was worn a fillet or head band, or sometimes a white turban. Others in the cavalry wore more colourful and diverse garments. Mid-thigh length tunics of brocade or printed cloth (for example, yellow with blue dots, green with checks in which a flowered motif was set in each compartment, or yellow with a pattern of birds, rosettes, lozenge shapes mainly in blue, yellow ochre or white), trousers, and an *uttariya*—a decorative cap-like head-dress of white or yellow with embossed flowers, completed their very colourful uniforms.

The elephant drivers were picturesque in their short-sleeved tight-fitting *cholaka* with decorative bands at the neck, hem, and sleeves. With this were worn short drawers of plain or gold-striped cloth and a skull cap or scarf on the head. The king himself, when attired for battle, wore a short, tight-sleeved *kancuka* and an elaborate turban with *sarpench.* His bodyguard carried curved swords like the Nepalese *khukri* and shields of rhinoceros hide in checked designs. His sword-bearer wore a patterned tight tunic with pointed ends reaching to the knees, and the *kayabandh* wound twice around the waist.

The leaders or chieftains of the various contingents in the army were decked in pearl-embroidered tunics made from the famous *stavarkha* cloth of Sassanian origin and *chaddars* of many colours, or in the complete Central Asian outfit consisting of a dark blue quilted tunic with a V-shaped neck and long full sleeves with soft dark trousers and a saffron turban of Indian origin instead of the Central Asian conical cap.

Armour was worn as further protection. It was known as the *cinacola,* probably of Chinese origin. It was sleeveless covering the front and back, and was made of metal. A helmet for soldiers was known as *sirastrajala.* Bows were of two kinds: the simple one-piece bow and the classic double-curved bow probably made of three pieces.

Religious Persons

The Hindu *sanyasi,* by the Gupta period had slowly given up his bark-strip garments and adopted red ochre robes, very similar to those of the Buddhist monk. It is from this period in history that there is a marked resemblance in the appearance of Hindu *sanyasis* and Buddhist monks. Earlier there had been marked differences. The red ochre *uttariya* of the *sanyasi* was tied into the *vaikaksha* style (crossed over the chest), or a tattered rag of the same colour knotted over the heart, and a deer skin was occasionally worn over the left shoulder. A loin cloth of the same red ochre colour, sometimes held up by a black leather belt, completed his costume. Later on, this costume was replaced by a stitched garment, either a robe or a patched tunic. The hair was normally matted and worn in a top knot tied with a cord or a fillet across the forehead, at times with the formidable emblem of a skull affixed to it. The matted hair took on a yellowish tinge due to ashes being rubbed into it, and appeared bleached from exposure to the sun.

The Brahmin *acharya* (teacher) normally wore a short *antariya* and *uttariya*; the latter could be of narrow strips stitched together. His head covering consisted of a *kantopa* (cap) over his top knot.

The Buddhist monk (*bhikkhu*) and nun (*bhikkhuni*) now wore linen or silk. The poorer ones dyed their red or yellow linen garments inexpensively, in a dye made from dates, red earth, red stone powder or wild pear. The monks wore a *samghati* (double cloak), *uttarasanga* (upper garment), and *antarvasa* (lower garment). The *antarvasa*, 36 inches wide and 2½ yards long, was wound round the waist where it was secured by a girdle. Both the girdle and inner cloth had subtle differences in the way they were worn by each sect. The *samghati* was a 2½ yards square with a five-finger wide strip attached at the neck. This had a drawstring through it, which was tied at the chest. When the weather was particularly cold both Buddhist monks and laymen wore a quilted garment called *hi-pa*, which covered the front of the body and went over the left shoulder and across the back, being fixed in position under the arm at the right side, something like the deer or antelope skins which were used by religious orders in the past for protection.

The nuns wore the same garments as the monks, only their *antariya*, was stitched together at the edges to form a skirt, and was 36 inches wide and 72 inches long. This was gathered and tied at the waist. After adolescence the nuns covered their breasts. Besides these three garments, both monks and nuns were allowed to have two pair of undergarments, a mat and towels.

Jain monks had to wear totally unstitched white linen or cotton garments, which were not to be cut or joined; this meant they were specially woven to specifications. Their *chaddar*, *antariya*, and *kayabandh* could occasionally be made from camel's hair, jute, and even bark fibre. Very rarely was silk allowed, its use being generally discouraged. The *kayabandh* could not be more than four fingers wide. For Jain nuns, the rules were even more specific and the number of garments they wore was astonishing. The large number was designed to conceal the shape of the body as much as possible. Four different *langoti* type of drawers, the *ardhoruka*, were worn one over the other to cover the lower parts of the body. Over this was worn the *lehnga* or skirt known as *bhairnivasani* which was not to be drawn tightly over the hips and was held by a string and not a *kayabandh* at the waist, as the latter was considered too fashionable. The breasts were covered by a length of cloth 1¼ yards by 18 inches approximately. This was wrapped tightly around and fixed at the side. The *aupakaksiki* was 27 inches square and covered a part of the chest and back, and was tied over the left shoulder : the *vaikaksiki*, absolutely similar, was worn in the opposite direction and tied at the right shoulder. It is not difficult to imagine how shapeless and unattractive the whole ensemble must have been. Finally there was the *samghati* or double cloak. Each nun was allowed four of these in different widths from 1 to 4 yards and each about 2 yards long. Each cloak was to be worn on a specific occasion, and the one which was 1½ yards wide was to be used only in the toilet. In addition, a large square shawl of 2 yards was used during particularly bad weather. Shoes were not worn by Jain nuns or monks.

Textiles and Dyes

In the Gupta age the finest textiles were available, printed, painted, dyed, and richly patterned in weaves or embroidery. The art of calico printing improved considerably and many of the traditional prints of today originated in this period. There were checks, stripes, and bird and animal motifs, for example geese, swans, deer, elephants, and so on. Delicate embroidery on muslins, consisting of hundreds of different varieties of flowers and birds, was skilfully executed, along with intricately woven brocades which continued to be in vogue. These brocades with floral designs from the Deccan and Paithan were like the Jamiwar and Himru fabrics of today. The former is a silk floral design on a wool background and the latter has cotton for its main warp. Gauze from Dacca was noted for its transparency and was said to be so fine that the only evidence of its presence was the delicate gold edging of the cloth. This had led to the further sophistication of wearing a transparent garment over a brightly coloured one. Before this, the transparency of the cloth had only accentuated the nudity below.

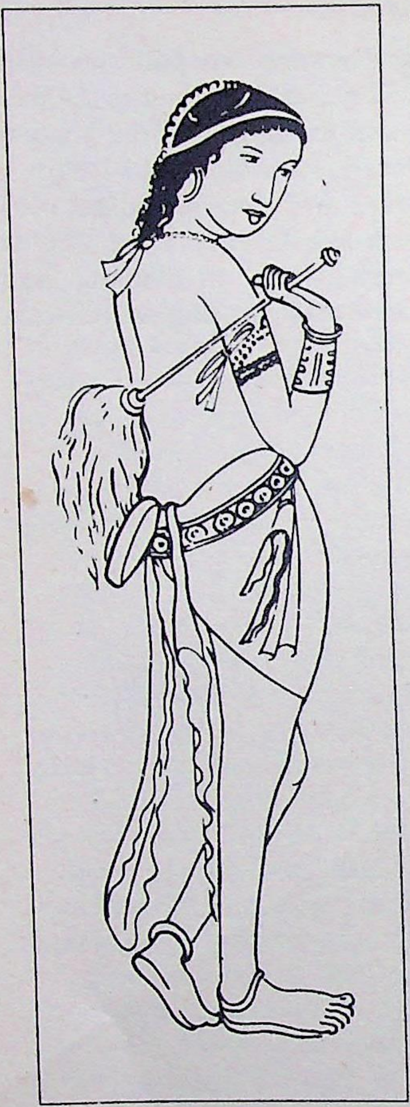
Gold and silver woven brocades of Benares which had a very ancient tradition were still used, and in the north and the north-west the art of embroidery reached the highest peak of development. Silk was woven in black and white check patterns especially for cushions which had handsome covers of gold, silver or dark-coloured cloth embroidered or patterned in silver stars or four-petalled flowers, or of striped materials with chess-patterned bands. Special bedcovers known as *nicola* and *pracchadapata*, and rugs or floor carpets known as *rallaka* and *kambala* were made.

Dyeing too, was very sophisticated and the diagonal stripes, which were popular, merged in each other in places as soft and dark tones. This beautiful effect was created by the resist dye technique. Tie dyeing of Gujarat and Rajasthan, in many different patterns, was called *pulakabandha* and was used a great deal in the upper garments of women. The process of bleaching was perfected, and all thin bleached silks were classified as *dukula*. Benares tissues and brocades which had been the prerogative of the rich now percolated to form the festive and bridal attire of the poorer classes, for whom a special cheaper variety known as *rasimal* was available.

Special costly silken fabric known as *stavaraka* was originally manufactured in Persia and is known to have been imported into India. This was a cloth studded with clusters of bright pearls and worn by royalty.

Styles

In the highly civilized Gupta empire, we find jewelled head-dresses, and striped muslin *lehngas* adding to the sensuous fullness of the body and lending it a free-flowing movement. The mood is relaxed, somnolent and languorous, with sheer floating scarves and shining radiant eyes accentuating the aura of dream-like delicacy. Pearl strands decorating the archways, and looped on diadems and around necks, further enhance the undulating movements of the graceful figures.



54. MAIDSERVANT
(Ajanta, Cave XVII)

Antariya
worn very short in *kachcha* style; after knotting at the centre both ends are passed between the legs, fluted and tucked in at back centre to fall to the ankles; one end has been tucked in under the *mekhala* and the other over it

Muktavali
necklace of one strand of small pearls (*haravsti*)

Keyura
worn on the upper arms—*baju*, cylindrical, inset with pearls and tied on with ribbons

Valaya
bracelet of filigree work

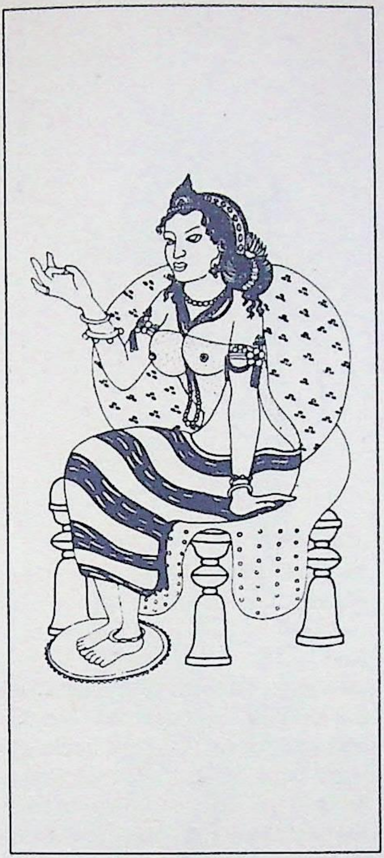
Mekhala
girdle at the hips is decorated with discs; a small frill of cloth hangs at the side which could be part of the end of the *antariya* pulled around from the back after tucking in, and tucked in again at the front

Kundala
simple ring-type earrings

Nupura
anklets are simple and cylindrical

Hairstyle
hair has been drawn back into one plait, with a few curls at the forehead; a fillet is worn and also a chaplet of flowers to which a semicircular ornament has been attached on either side of the centre parting

It is possible that she wears a short choli of very light material. She holds a fly-whisk (chauri).



55. PRINCESS
(Ajanta, Cave I)

Lehnga
the *antariya* has now become the *lehnga;* it is held first at the right hip then taken once around the body and tucked in tightly at the left hip in pleats or simply as in this figure

Uttariya
of sheer material, thrown over the breasts

Muktavali
several pearl necklaces of small and large pearls including one long strand which hangs between the breasts

Valaya
one simple and one ornamental bracelet is worn on each wrist

Keyura
armlet of filigree work festooned with pearls on upper arms

Bali
ring-type earrings with pearls strung; a smaller simple ring is worn on the upper part of the ear

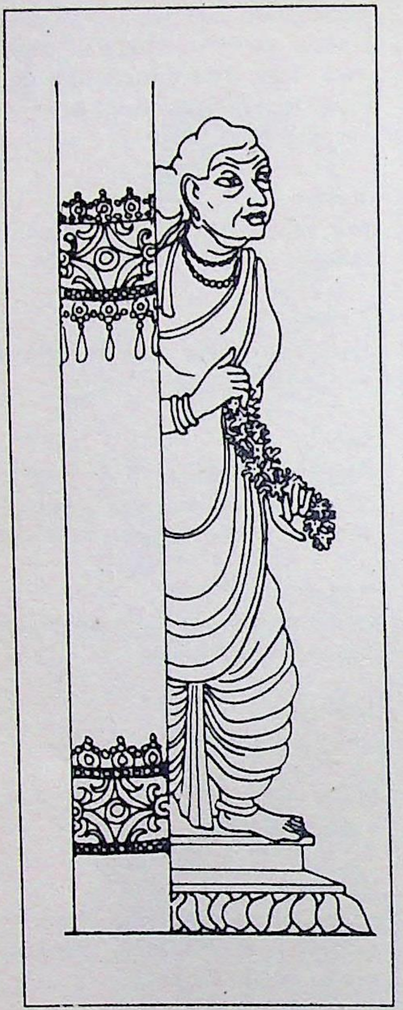
Anguliya
ring worn on the little finger of the right hand

Nupura
very simple anklet

Kirita
a decorative tiara

Hairstyle
elaborate, adorned with flowers and jewels, the hair being worn in a large bun at the nape

The stool or short-backed chair (piddha) has turned wooden legs very similar to those available in most parts of India today. Covering it is a pearl studded or tie-dyed cross-shaped cloth. The large cushion at the back is covered with printed cloth and the cushion used as footrest has a pearl edge.



56. OLD WOMAN

(Ajanta, Cave XVII)

Sari

an elongated form of the *antariya*, the left end is passed between the legs and tucked in at the back; the right and longer end is taken around the body and thrown over the left shoulder from the front and is visible in folds at the left

Muktavali

two strings of pearls at the neck

Valaya

simple bracelets, two at each wrist

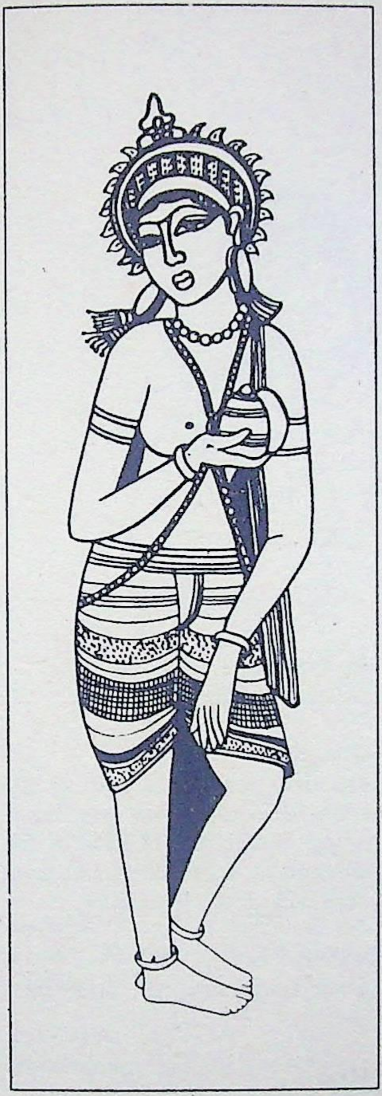
Kundala

ring-type earrings

Hairstyle

drawn back and knotted

She is carrying a flower garland.



57. VOTARY FIGURE
(Ajanta, Cave II)

Ardhoruka
langoti type of patterned striped drawers—a short strip of cloth worn around the waist with an attached strip from the centre of the waist which is drawn up between the legs and tucked in at the back

Choli
short blouse of diaphanous material

Vaikaksha
two long strings of pearls crossed at the chest

Muktavali
string of pearls at the neck

Kundala
large disc-type earrings

Uttariya
worn over the left shoulder

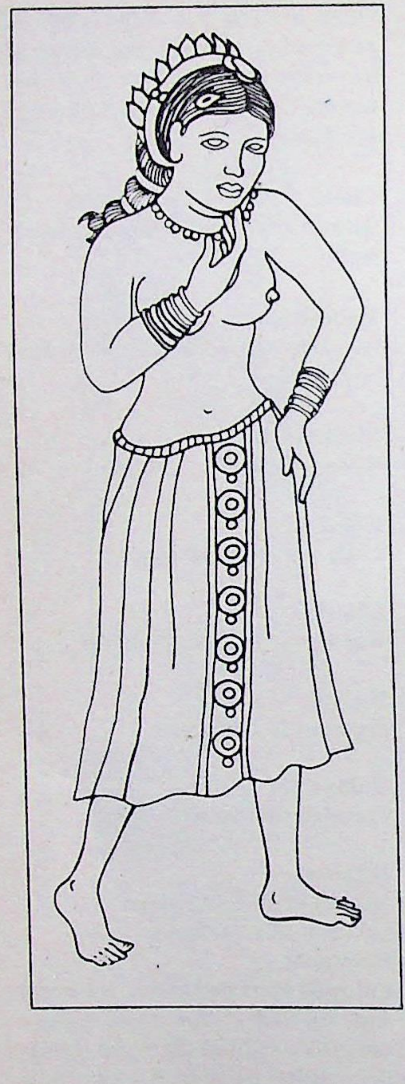
Keyura
flat simple armbands

Valaya
bracelet, one on each wrist

Nupura
anklets of simple design

Headgear
a striped scarf tied round the head and knotted at the back, tassels are visible behind the right shoulder; further back on the head is a decoration of leaves with a central motif probably tied around a chignon-type hairstyle

She carries an offering and could be of foreign origin as the scarf on the head suggests.



58. COURT LADY

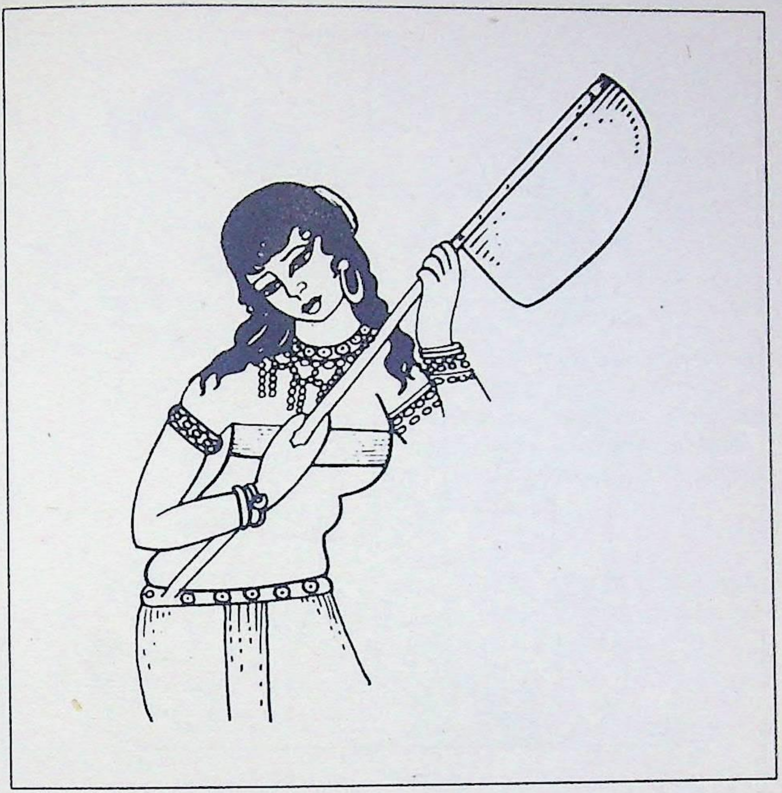
(Ajanta, Cave I)

Ghagri
the early form of a skirt to the knees in which there is a draw-string (*nada*); the border of the woven silk material can be seen vertically down the centre

Valaya
graded ivory or conch-shell bangles

Hara
bead necklace

Hairstyle
centre parting with chignon on nape decorated with ribbons; a wreath of leaves is worn around the head



59. MAIDSERVANT
(Ajanta, Cave XVI)

Ghagri
a simple skirt with drawstring (*nada*)

Pratidhi
breast-band tied at the back

Girdle
ornamented, worn over the skirt for additional support

Vijayantika
necklace of strings of looped pearls with precious stones

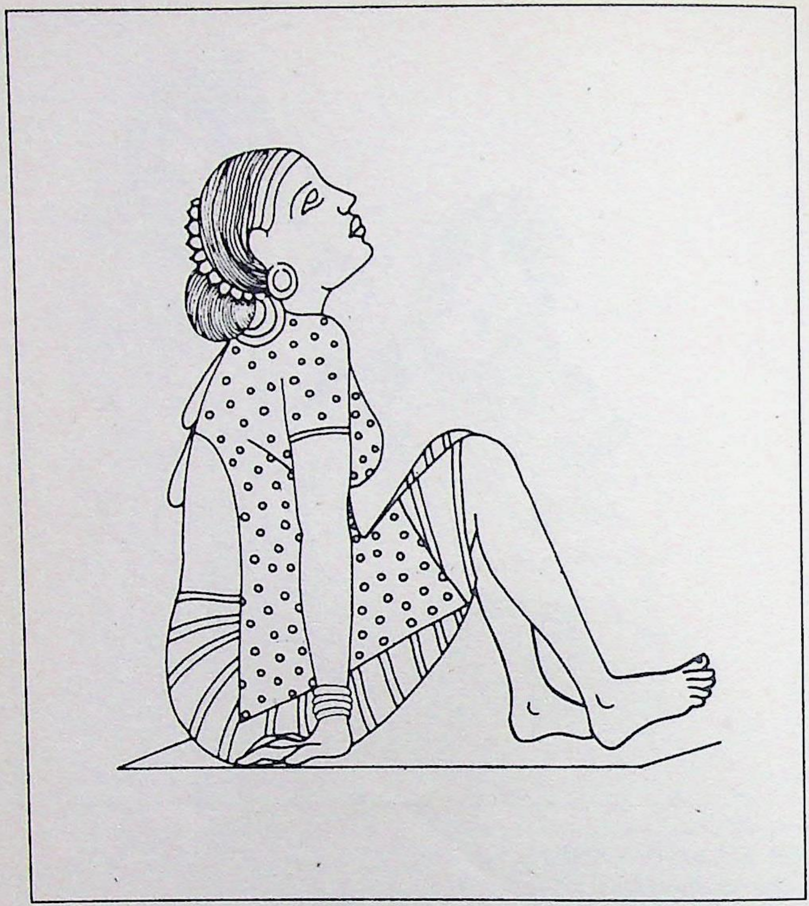
Keyura
armlets with incised design

Valaya
bangles and pearl bracelets

Kundala
large ring-type earrings

Hairstyle
worn shoulder-length and loose

She carries a large palm-leaf fan.



60. MAIDSERVANT
(Ajanta, Cave I)

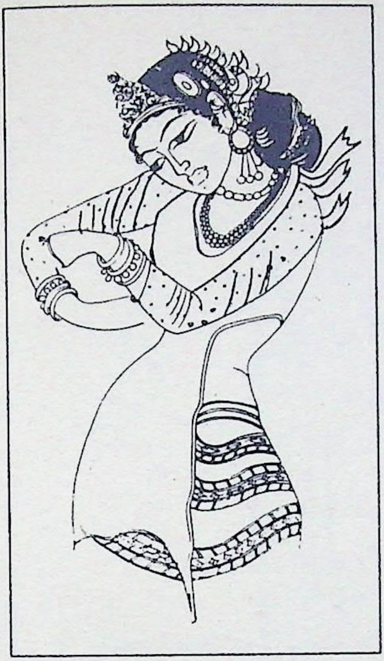
Cholaka
choli-type blouse with an apron front and V-neck made of *pulakabandha*—tie and dye cloth

Antariya
lehnga style, of striped cloth

Kundala
ring-type earrings

Valaya
simple bangles

Hairstyle
simple bun with flower wreath (*mala*)



61. DANCING GIRL

(Ajanta, Cave I)

Cholaka
fitted *choli*-type blouse with an apron front; the long sleeves are of dark red brocade, while the middle is of white silk, probably tied at the back with ribbons that are visible

Antariya
lehnga style, is of silk with purple, green and yellow stripes with lozenge patterns in white

Muktavali
three-stringed pearl necklace

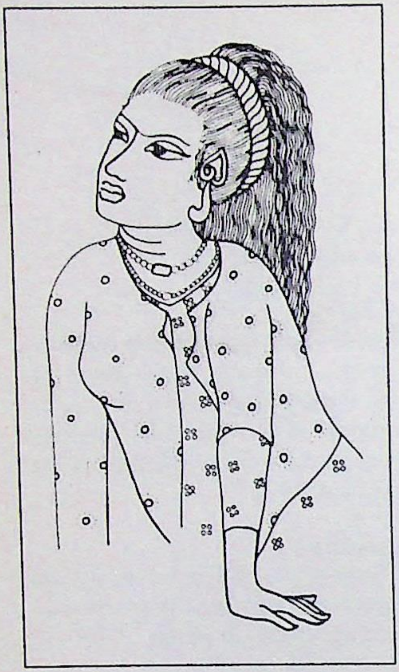
Hara
necklace of large beads

Valaya
two simple and one ornamental bangle on each wrist

Kancala Kundala
elaborate earrings with pendants

Mukuta
tiara of gold

Hairstyle
large bun at the nape with wreaths of flowers and several strings of pearls or gold chain (*sarasari*) wound around and held by brooches



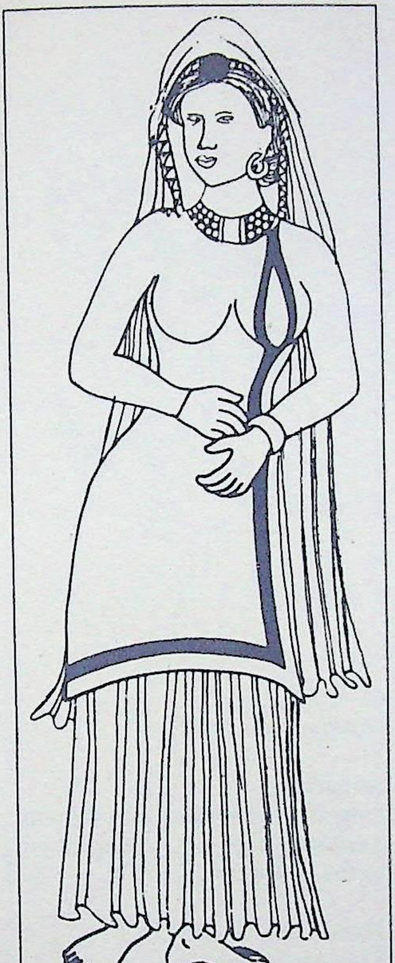
62. MAIDSERVANT
(Ajanta, Cave I)

Cholaka
double jacket of *bandhni* (tie-dye cloth) the upper one with shorter sleeves in the *angarkha* style; the lower one is green in colour with longer sleeves

Hara
two necklaces, both of beads with the central bead of a different shape

Hairstyle
curly hair held back by a fillet

Appears to be a foreigner as is evident from the simple hairstyle and lack of ornate jewellery. The angarkha is shown open, the left edge of the neckline fastening is curved to fit the inside right edge probably with ties as in the modern angarkha.



63. YASODA

(Deogarh)

Angarkha
mid-thigh length tunic with left opening and bordered edge all around; it has long sleeves and a four-pointed hem in Persian style

Ghagri
heavily gathered skirt tied at the hips with a *nada*

Kantha
flat heavy short necklace

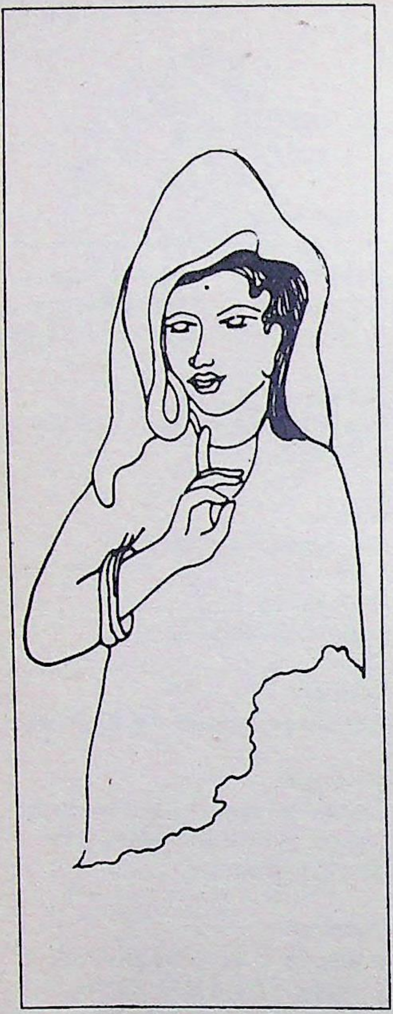
Valaya
bangle on left wrist

Mukuta
tiara-like ornament at the forehead

Uttariya
worn over the head and left hanging behind the shoulders; it has a decorative border

Hairstyle
probably a thick twisted roll of padding is fixed at the centre parting and held in place by tiny plaits of hair; this is still used to hold high the head-covering by some women of north India and gives an extremely regal effect to the head veil

The covering of the head with the veil is possibly of Parthian/Scythian origin and is seldom seen at Ajanta.



64. MAID
(Ajanta, Cave XVI)

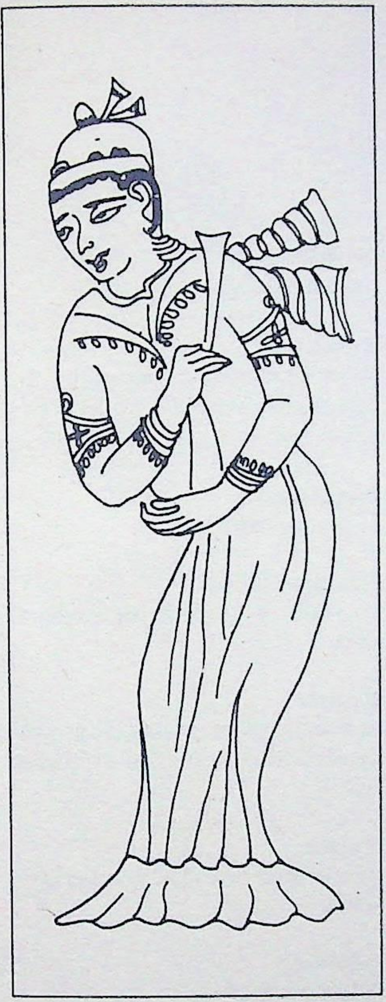
Angarkha
long-sleeved tunic with probably a left side-opening running down to the pointed hem

Hara
a simple chain

Kundala
large ring-type earrings

Uttariya
worn over the head and left hanging behind the shoulders in Parthian or Scythian style

Hairstyle
as in Fig. 63



65. ATTENDANT

(Ajanta, Cave I)

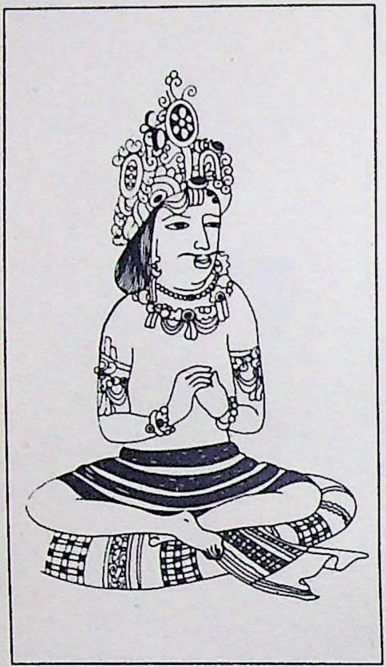
Robe

ankle-length in white material with a pale blue frill at the hem; it has tight sleeves and a collar; the hem of the sleeves and the edge of the collar are embroidered; there is a *tiraz band* trimming at the upper arm and floating ribbons at the back opening

Headgear

a round cap of red material (broadcloth or velvet) with a white border of fur or wool and white plume at the centre

This is often referred to as the Persian Embassy scene, but the figure appears to be a Turanian Tartar from Central Asia. Turanian Tartars were influenced in their dress by the Persians, as seen in the tiraz band, floating ribbons and round cap.



66. KING

(Ajanta, Cave XVII)

Antariya
short and striped worn in the *lehnga* style with a long end visible on the cushion

Necklace
of gems with loops

Suddha Ekavali
necklace of pearls with a central gem

Keyura
elaborate armlets with loops suspended from a cylinder of filigree work

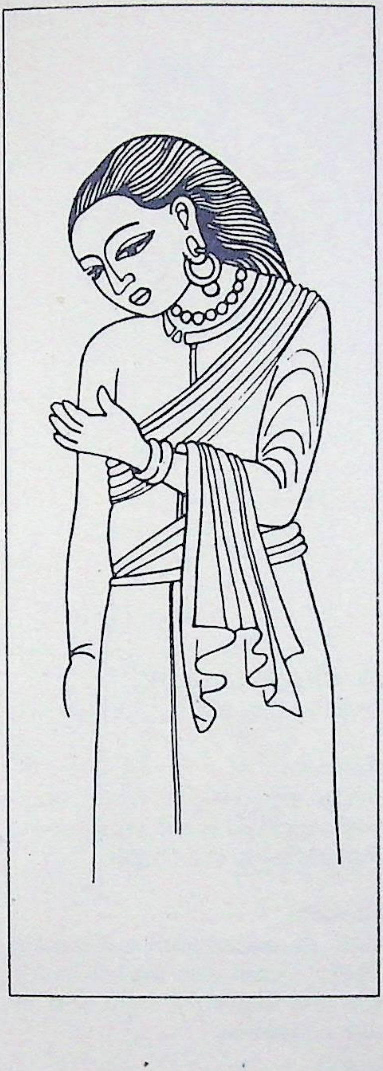
Valaya
ornamental bracelet, one on each wrist

Anguliya
ring on little finger

Kundala
elaborate earrings

Kirita
tiara of metal with ornamental discs and motifs

Silk ties on necklace are visible at the right shoulder.



67. MINISTER
(Ajanta)

Kancuka
indigenous simple round-neck tunic with long sleeves and a front opening; probably calf-length

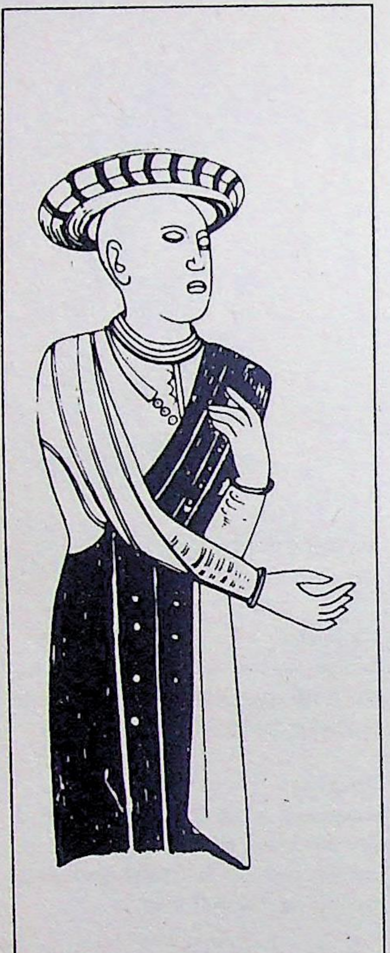
Uttariya
wrapped around the waist and thrown over the left shoulder in *upavita* fashion with the final end resting on the left arm

Bali
simple ring-type earrings with pearl suspended

Haravsti
large pearl necklace

Torque
simple necklet

Hairstyle
long hair combed back smoothly



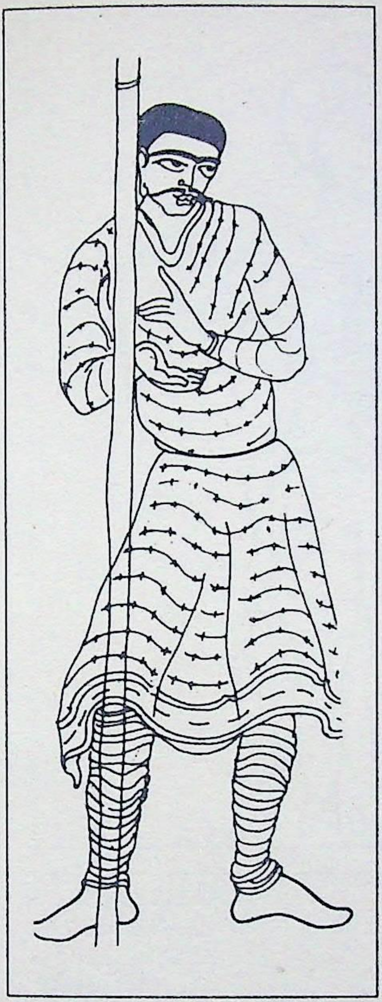
68. CHAMBERLAIN
(Ajanta, Cave XVII)

Kancuka
indigenous striped white tunic with long sleeves and a front opening; probably calf-length

Chaddar
cloth decorated with a fish-scale pattern; worn over the left shoulder and under the right arm in *upavita* fashion

Torque
necklet of twisted wire with beads

Headgear
flat turban of twisted cloth held by ribbon bands at intervals, worn as a mark of office by the chamberlain



69. GUARD
(Ajanta, Cave II)

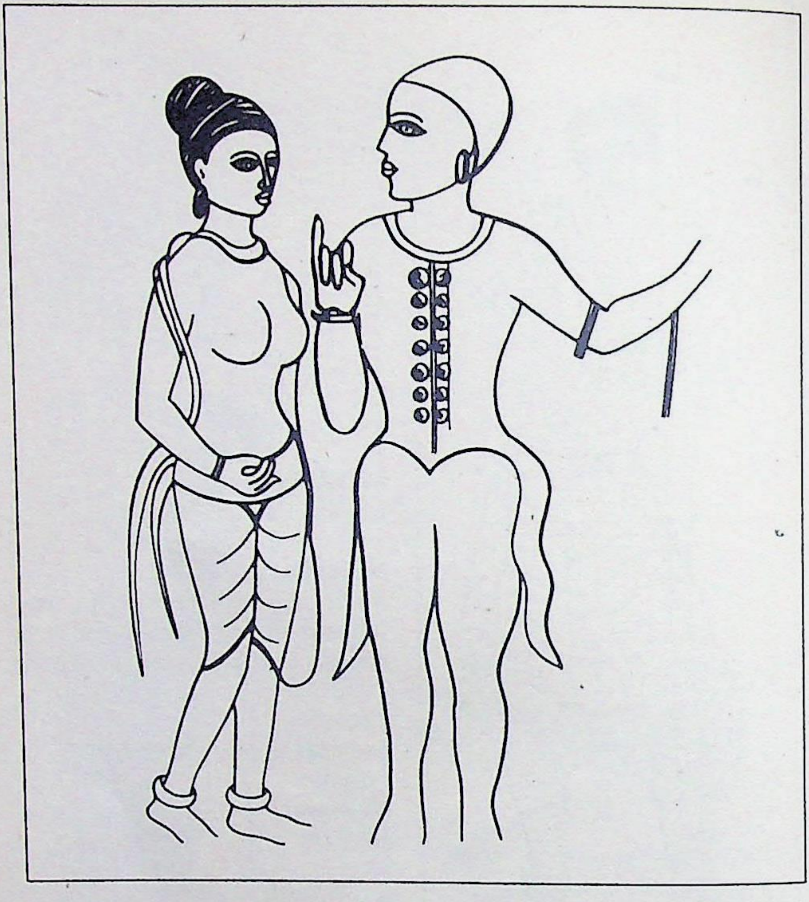
Kancuka
mid-calf length tunic with four pointed ends, V-neck and long sleeves; the cloth is star-patterned

Trousers
gathered in *churidar* style

Headgear
skull cap

Kayabandh
sash tied at the waist

This kancuka has the four-pointed hem of the Kushan–Parthian under-tunic, which was common to all Scythian races including the Kshatrapas. The indigenous influence is in the choice of thinner and more decorative cloth used to suit the climatic conditions of India, and the rich way of life at court. The lack of jewellery would also denote a foreigner.



70. KING AND QUEEN

(Gupta gold coins)

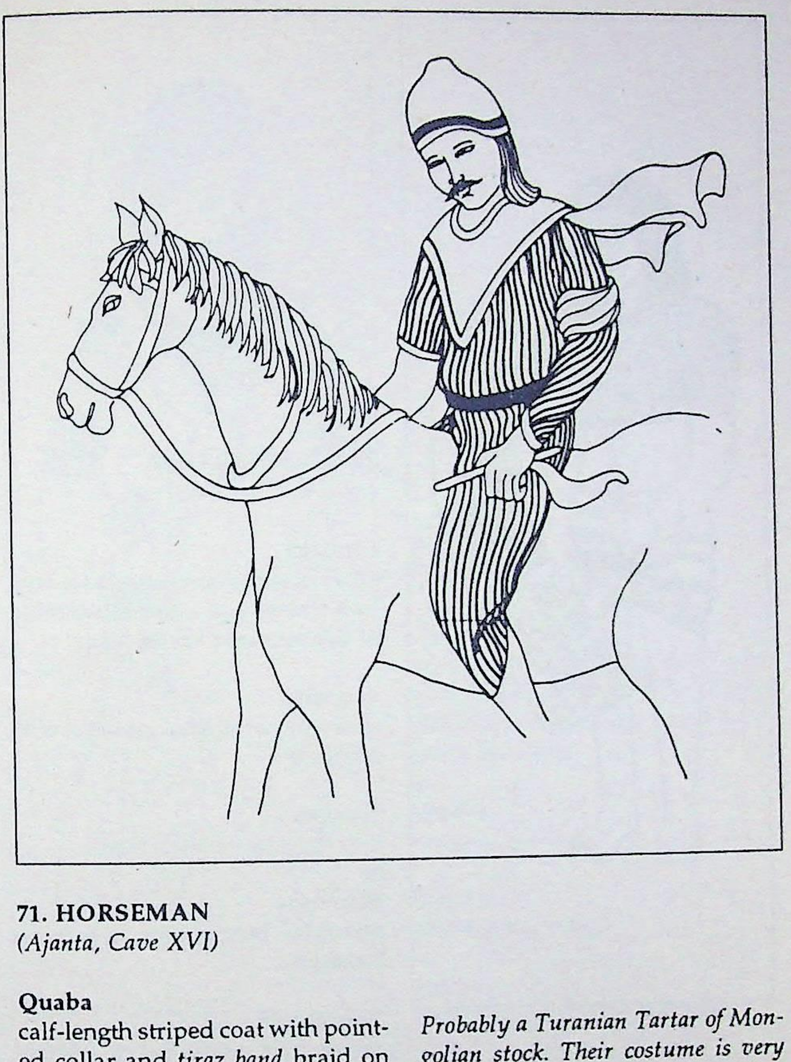
Chugha
close-fitting coat of the Kushans with a row of decorative buttons with fastenings at the centre; the opening in front is held together and the waist edge ends in a point at the centre

Trousers
do not appear to have creases at the knee

Headgear
close-fitting cap

Earrings
button style

The queen is dressed in indigenous costume as seen in her antariya and uttariya, her hair is worn in a bun at the top of the head. From the Licchavi tribe, she wears nupura on the ankles.



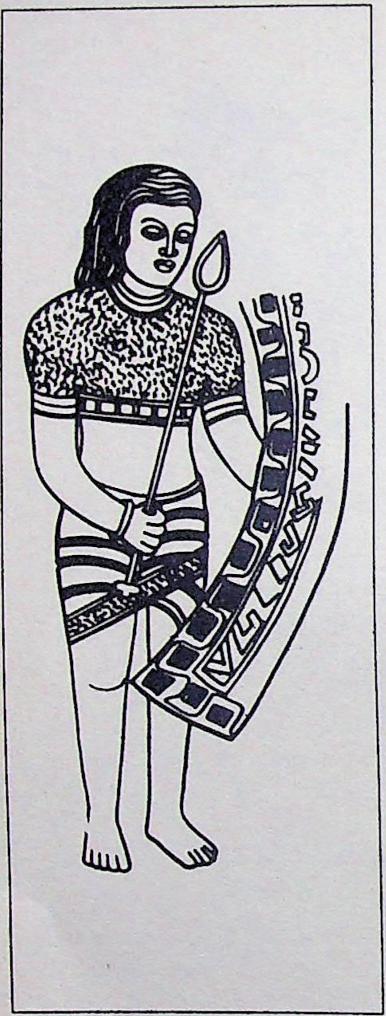
71. HORSEMAN
(Ajanta, Cave XVI)

Quaba
calf-length striped coat with pointed collar and *tiraz band* braid on upper arms; floating ribbon ties are visible at the back

Headgear
dome cap with band

Belt
worn at the waist

Probably a Turanian Tartar of Mongolian stock. Their costume is very similar to that of the Persians, from whom the tiraz band trimming, pointed collar and floating ribbon ties originated. Baggy trousers tucked into boots are probably worn.



72. FOOT SOLDIER

(Ajanta, Cave XVII)

Cholaka
short jacket covering the chest with half-sleeves and a decorative braid at the hem and sleeve-edge

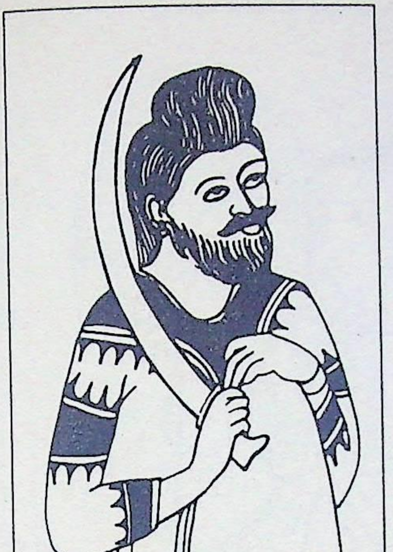
Antariya
short and of striped material with a border

Kangan
one bracelet on each wrist

Hairstyle
shoulder length hair; wears no headgear

Equipment
spear and rectangular, curved shield of rhinoceros hide

Elephant riders and foot soldiers in the Gupta army wore a similar uniform. The former were sometimes more resplendent in gold-striped antariya and skull caps or fillets on their heads.



73. GUARD
(Ajanta, Cave XVII)

Quaba
of foreign origin, this calf-length tunic has the Persian-type pointed collar and *tiraz band* braid trimming on upper arms

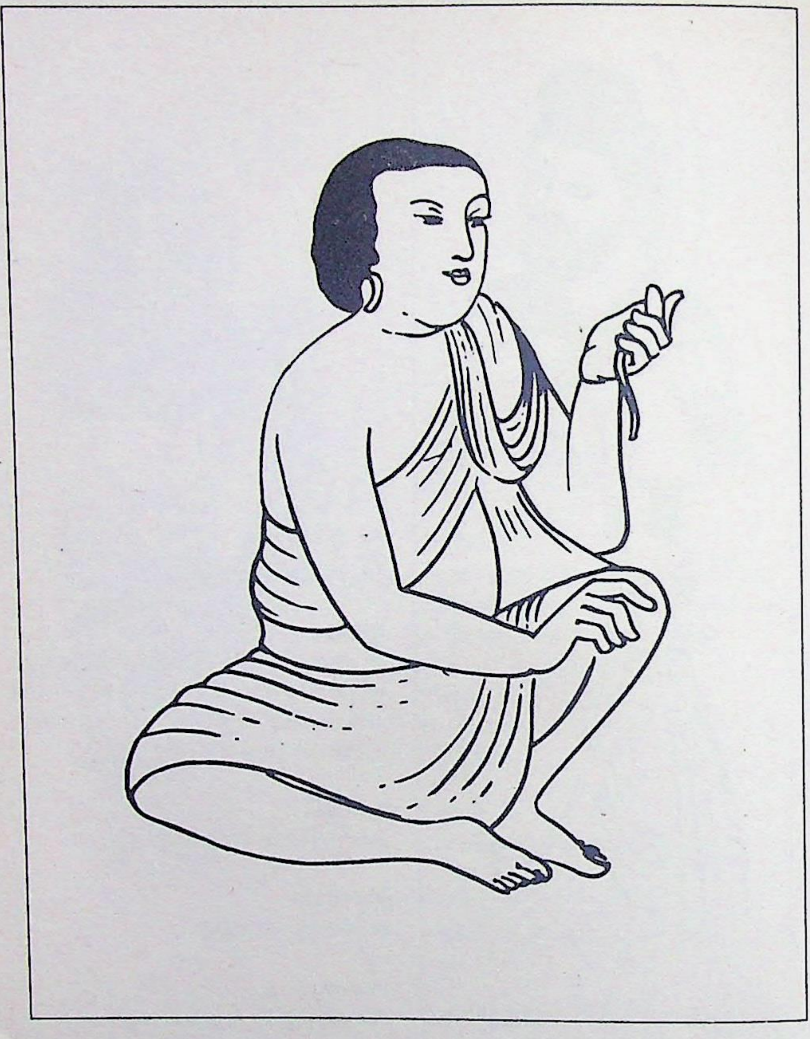
Girdle
worn at the waist

Kundala
disc-type earrings

Hairstyle
drawn up in a large top knot

Equipment
oval shield and curved sword

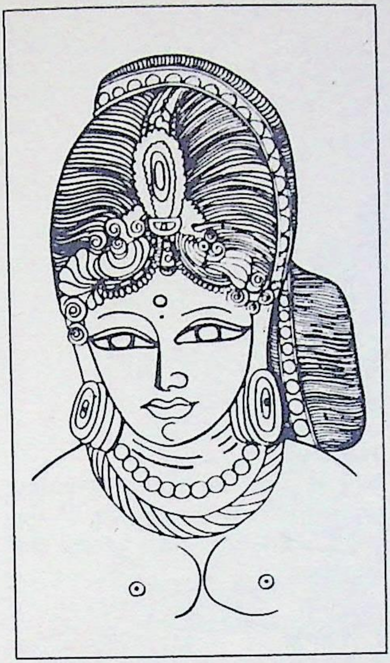
Although, the costume is foreign the hairstyle, sword and earrings are indigenous. This was probably a foreign uniform adopted by the Gupta army.



74. BHIKKU
(Ajanta, Cave XVI)

Antaravasa
this lower garment was normally 36" wide and 2½ yards long and worn around the waist where it was secured by a girdle or tucked into the *nada* (drawstring)

Uttarasanga
the upper garment is thrown over the shoulder in a loop



75. COURT LADY
(Gwalior Museum)

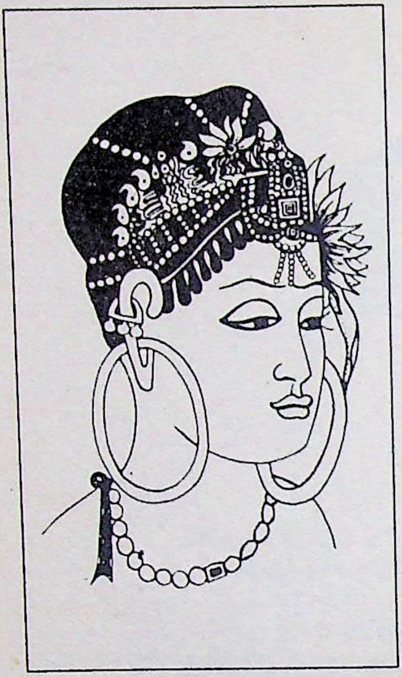
Hairstyle
hair is worn with a centre parting which is covered by a decorative ornament attached to the *mukuta* (tiara) at the forehead and the jewelled braid at the left side of the nape; the braid then continues like a fillet around the crown of the head

Mukuta
highly decorative in embossed gold or silver, has little pendants suspended from it at the forehead

Kundala
large wheel-like earrings

Haravsti
one strand of large pearls

Torque
twisted wire necklace of Celtic origin



76. FEMALE VOTARY

(Ajanta, Cave VI)

Hairstyle
hair is worn in a large pompadour style on the crown of the head with tiny curls along the forehead

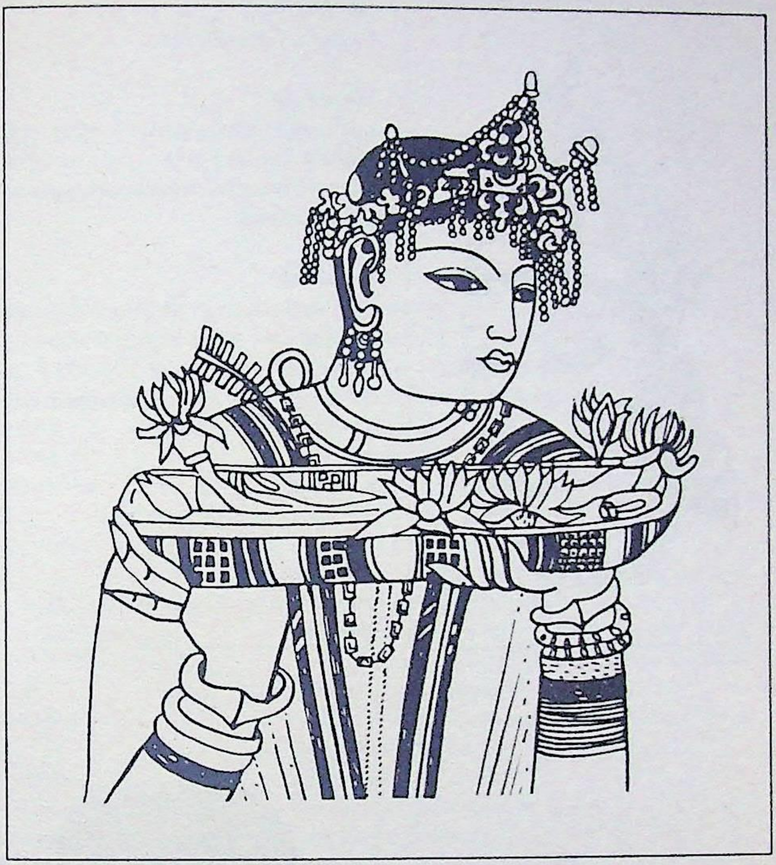
Ratnajali
from the elaborate tiara-like ornament around the head, strands of pearls form a net over the hairstyle; there is a central ornament at the forehead from which are suspended strands of pearls

Mala
large flowers above the ear are used as further ornamentation to the hairstyle

Kundala
very large ring-type earrings

Bali
small earrings with suspended pearls; worn higher up on the ear

Suddha Ekavali
pearl necklace with a gem at the centre; has ribbon ties



77. KING
(Ajanta, Cave I)

Hairstyle
short hair

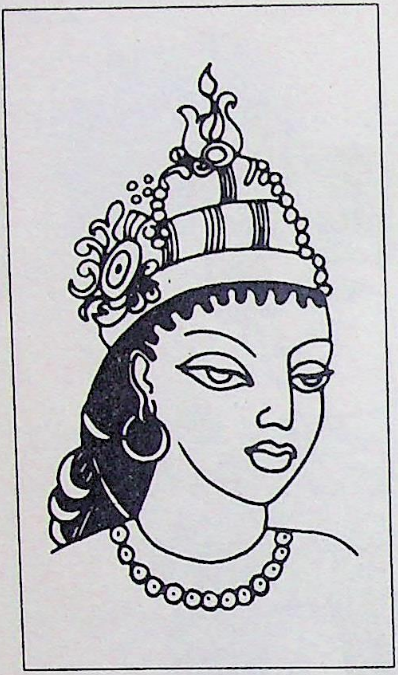
Mukuta
tiara of floral motifs from which pearls are looped and suspended

Bali
earrings from which separate drops of pearls and sapphires are suspended

Valaya
bracelets of different kinds at the wrists

Sutra
simple chain at the neck

He wears a brown striped silk garment. He is making an offering of lotus flowers to the Buddha on a tray which appears to be covered or painted in a design.



78. PRINCE

(Ajanta, Cave XVII)

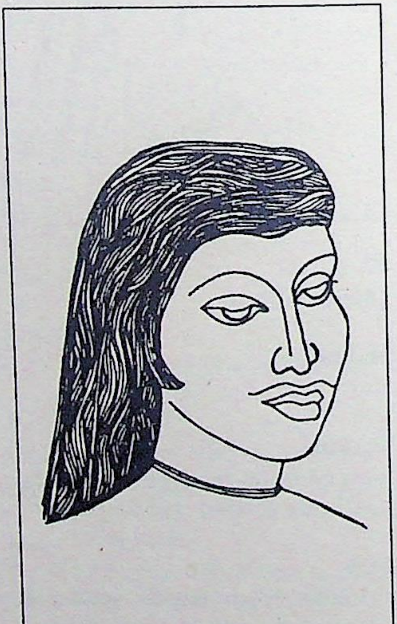
Hairstyle
appears to be shoulder length and loosely knotted at the nape; bound with ribbons with stylized curls at the forehead

Headgear
twisted turban in stripes or bound at intervals with braid; there are large gem-encrusted brooches at the sides and a central ornament on the top

Kundala
simple ring-type earrings

Muktavali
one-string pearl necklace

←┘



79. YOUNG MAN

(Ajanta, Cave XVII)

Hairstyle
simple, shoulder length, drawn back without a parting and left loose; a shorter strand is seen over the ear

└→

Glossary

ajina	skin of antelope or goat
ajinayajnopavita	a deer skin worn over the left shoulder by Hindu ascetics
angada	armlet like a coiled snake
angarkha	tunic with side fastening
anguliya	finger ring
antariya	lower garment
ardhoruka	*langoti* type of drawers worn by women
atkan	bead necklace
baju band	armlet for upper arm
bali	ring-type earring with pearl strung on it
bashylk	Scythian pointed felt cap
bhairnivasani	earliest form of skirt, a tubular cloth held up in gathers around the waist by a girdle
bindi	forehead ornament
calanika	*antariya* worn between the legs and then wrapped around the hips
chaddar	a large shawl
chalana	loose or close-fitting trousers
channavira	crossbelt on chest
chattra	umbrella, symbol of royalty
chattradhara	attendant who carried the royal umbrella
chaulari	four-stringed necklace
chauri	fly whisk, made from yak's tail
cinacola	sleeveless metal armour, probably of Chinese origin
cholaka	short blouse with apron front
choli	short blouse
chudamani	lotus-shaped ornament for hair, its petals ornamented with pearls and precious stones
chugha	coat worn over tunic by Kushans
dehri	disc-type earring
dhammilia	an elaborate hairstyle consisting of flowers, pearls and jewels
dhanush	bow

ekavali	single-strand pearl necklace
gada	heavy club
ghagri	simple stitched skirt
gurnakuntala	a style of wearing hair (male), shoulder length, curled and hanging loose to the shoulder, sometimes held in place with a head band or a string of pearls
hara	necklace
haravsti	large pearl necklace
hemasutra	chain for neck made of gold with precious stones in the centre
hemavaikaksha	two long wreaths of flowers or pearls crossed at the chest, worn mainly by women
himru	intricately woven brocade of today with cotton for its main warp
hiranya	gold
jalaka	metallic wire gauze used in making coats of mail
jamiwar	intricately woven brocade of today, of silk floral design on a wool background
jatabhara	heavy, bundled top-knot of matted locks worn by Hindu ascetics
jhangia	short drawers
jimiki	large earrings with tassels
kabaribandha	simple hairstyle in which the hair is twisted into a chignon or bun
kachcha	a style in which the *antariya* is drawn up between the legs to form a trouser-like garment
kakshyabandha	a thick jewelled roll worn aslant at the hips
kalabaku	many-stringed cummerbund
kambala	blanket
kanaka-kamala	a full-blown lotus design earring set in rubies, still used in south India
kancala-kundala	elaborate earrings with pendants
kanci	hip girdle with bells
kancuka	tunic
kangan	bracelet
kantha	short necklace, broad and flat
kantopa	cap with flaps covering the ears
kara	simple ring-type anklet
karnika	earring
karnaphul	flower-shaped earring

kaseyyaka	high quality cotton or silk
katisutra	string for suspending the hip belt
kausheya	a type of tussar silk
kayabandh	cummerbund, sash
kesapasa	hairstyle in which the hair was looped close to the head in an elongated knot
keyura	armlet for upper arm
khadga	sword
khadgavahini	a female attendant to royalty who carried the royal sword on her shoulder
khinkhwab	brocade of silk and gold or silver wires interwoven
kushalaka	waist cloth of Buddhist monks
kinkini	anklet with small bells suspended
kirita	crown or tiara
kosha	sheath for sword
kundala	simple ring or circle earring
kurta	under-shirt of Parthian, Kushan, Scythian origin, with four-pointed hem and ruched sleeves
lambanam	long necklace
langoti	a narrow strip of cloth suspended from a waist cord and drawn up between the legs
lehnga	style in which the *antariya* is wrapped like a skirt around hips
makarika	ornament for the hair in the shape of a fish-crocodile
mala	garland of flowers
malai	gold coin necklace of south India
mangamalai	gold coin necklace of south India set with gems
maninupura	anklets of jewelled beads
manjira	hollow anklets which made a tinkling sound in movement
mauli	turban
maulibandha	an elaborate style of wearing the turban
maulimani	jewelled clasp for the turban
mekhala	girdle or hip belt
muktajala	a net of pearls worn over the chignon to decorate the hair
muktavali	necklace of single strand of pearls
muktayajnopavita	sacred thread made of pearls
mukuta	crown
muraja	a sash with drum-headed knots at the ends

nada	drawstring through skirt for holding it up
nicola	designed bedcovers
nishka	necklace of coins
nivi bandha	the preliminary knot made to tie the *antariya* at the waist
nupura	anklet
opasa	fillet for hair
padapatra	garter-like decorative ornament for the thigh
paklari	five-stringed necklace
patka	a decorative panel of cloth tucked in at the waist over the *antariya*
patra	a begging bowl
pattabandha	ornamented gold strip for holding the turban in position
pattika	flat, ribbon-shaped elaborately embroidered cummerband
phalaka	slab-like gems
phalakahara	necklace with slab-like gems at intervals
phalakavalaya	bracelet with slab-like gems set into it
piddha	low chair or stool
pracchadapata	designed bedcover
pratidhi	breast-band
praveni	plait of hair
pulakabandha	tie-dyeing of Gujarat and Rajasthan
putalya	contemporary gold coin necklace of Maharashtra
rallaka	rugs or floor carpets
rasana	girdle made up of linked chains or strung with pearls, beads, or precious stones
ratna	precious stones
ratnajali	a net of braid and pearls worn around chignon by women
ratnanguliya	finger-ring studded with precious stones
ratnavali	jewelled net worn around the chignon
rupya	silver
samghati	cloak of Buddhist monks
samkaksika	buckled belt of Buddhist monks
sankla	thick chain-type anklet
satlari	seven-stringed necklace
sirastra	helmet
sirastrajala	helmet
sitara	star-shaped forehead ornament for women
sraja	garland of flowers
stanamsuka	Persian-influenced knee- or thigh-length tunic

suddha-ekavali	pearl necklace with gem at the centre
sutra	chain for neck
suvarna	gold
talapatra	earring which originated from a small strip of palm leaf rolled and inserted into the lobe
tamra	copper
tarahara	a single strand of big pearls
tilari	three-stringed necklace
tiraz band	ornamented braid decorating the upper part of the sleeve
torque	a simple necklace of gold wire originally of Celtic origin
tulakoti	heavy anklets with the two ends enlarged at their meeting point
tulapansi	light-weight cotton from central India
upavita	upper garment worn over left shoulder and under right arm
urna	a symbol of perfection in the Buddha, a tuft of hair between the eyebrows
ushnisa	turban
uttarasanga	upper cloth used by Buddhist monks and nuns
uttariya	unstitched upper garment or scarf
vaikaksha	straps crossed at the chest
valaya	bracelet
valkala	bark-strip garments worn by Hindu ascetics
vethaka	simple sash
yajnopavita	sacred cord
yashti	necklace of gems and gold beads with large central bead

Bibliography

GENERAL WORKS

Basham, A.L. : *The Wonder that was India*, London, 1956.

Brij Bhushan, J. : *Indian Jewellery, Ornaments & Decorative Designs*, Bombay, 1958.

Chandra, Dr. Moti : *Costumes, Textiles, Cosmetics and Coiffure in Ancient and Mediaeval India*, Delhi, 1973.

Chandra, Dr. Rai Govind : *Studies in the Development of Ornaments and Jewellery in Proto-Historic India*, Varanasi, 1964.

Codrington, K. de B. : *Ancient India*, London, 1926.

Goetz, H. : *India* (Art of the World), New York, 1959.

Havell, E.B. : *Indian Sculpture & Painting*, London, 1908.

Kramrisch, S. : *Indian Sculpture*, Calcutta, 1933.

Majumdar, R.C. (ed) : *The History & Culture of the Indian People*, 7 vols, Bombay, 1955-63.

Rawlinson, H.G. : *Intercourse between India and the Western World*, Cambridge, 1916.

Rowland, Benjamin : *The Art and Architecture of India*, Penguin, 1970.

Thapar, Romila : *History of India*, Vol. 1, Penguin, Australia, 1966.

Zimmer, H. : *The Art of the Indian Asia*, New York, 1955.

MAURYAN–SUNGA PERIOD

Bachhofer, L. : *Early Indian Sculpture*, 2 vols, New York, 1929.

Burgess, J. : *Ancient Monuments, Temples & Sculpture of India*, 2 vols, London, 1892.

Cunningham, A. : *The Stupa of Bharut*, London, 1879.

Fergusson, J. and Burgess, J. : *Cave Temples of India*, London, 1880.

Grunwedel, Albert : *Buddhist Art in India*, Quaritch, London, 1901.

Marshall, J. and Foucher, A. : *The Monument of Sanchi*, 3 vols, London.

SATAVAHANA : EARLY AND LATE PERIODS

Barrett, D. : *Sculptures from Amaravati in the British Museum*, London, 1954.

Burgess, J. : *The Buddhist Stupas at Amaravati and Jaggayyapeta*, A.S.I., London, 1887.

Longhurst, A.H. : *The Buddhist Antiquities of Nagarjunakonda*, A.S.I., Mem, No. 54, Delhi, 1938.

Marshall, J. : *Taxila*, 3 vols, Cambridge, 1951.

Rao, P.R. Ramachandra: *The Art of Nagarjunakonda*, Madras, 1956.

Sivaramamurti, C. : *Amaravati, Sculptures in the Madras Museum*, Bulletin of the Madras Govt.

Museum N.S.G.S., General Section, Vol. IV, Madras, 1942.

KUSHAN PERIOD

Burgess, J. : Gandhara Sculptures, *Journal of Indian Art*, Vol. 8, London, 1898-1900.

Bussagli, M. : *Painting of Central Asia*, Geneva, 1963.

Foucher, A.L. : *Art Greco-Bouddhique due Gandara*, 2 vols, Paris, 1905-18.

Foucher, A. : *Beginnings of Buddhist Art*, London, 1918.

Ghirshman, R. : *Iran, Parthians and Sassanians*, 1912.

Ghosh, A. : Taxila, *Ancient India*, No. 4.

Hackin, J. and others : *Recherches Archeologigues a Begram*, Paris, 1939.

Marshall, J. : *Taxila*, 3 vols, Cambridge, 1951.

Marshall, J. : *The Buddhist Art of Gandhara*, Cambridge, 1960.

Puri, B.N. : *India under the Kushanas*, Bombay, 1965.

Rawlinson, H.G. : *India : A Short Cultural History*, London, 1937.

Stein, Aurel : *Innermost Asia*, Oxford, 1929.

Stein, Aurel: *On Ancient Central Asian Tracks*, London, 1933.

Tarn, W.W. : *The Greeks in Bactria and India*, Cambridge, 1938.

GUPTA PERIOD

Agrawala, V.S. : Terracotta Figurines of Ahichchhatra, *Ancient India*, No. 4, July 1947—Jan. 1948.

Agrawala, V.S. : *Gupta Art*, Lucknow, 1947.

Fergusson, J. and Burgess, J. : *Cave Temples of India*, London, 1880.

Griffiths, J. : *Paintings in the Buddhist Cave Temples of Ajanta*, 2 vols, London, 1896-97.

Singh, M. : *India: Paintings from Ajanta Caves*, New York, 1954.

Vats, Pandit Madho Sarup : *The Gupta Temple at Deogarh*, Memoirs of Archaeological Survey of India, No. 70, Delhi, 1952.

Yazdani, G. and others : *Ajanta*, 3 vols, Oxford, 1931-46.

Index

Alexander 3
Amazons 6, 63
Apollo 66
Arthashastra 7,8
Assyrian sword belt 33

Babylonian sword belt 33
Bactria 67
Banjara gypsies 93
Bark garments 9, 35, 67
    obsolescence of 101
Benares brocade 104
Bharata Natyar [illegible]
Bharut 69
Buddhism 8, 94

Camouflage, military 100
Cattle breeding 4
Cavalry costume 100
Celtic jewellery 65
Chandragupta Maurya 3
China
    links with 3
    trade with 36, 68
    influence of 101
Choli, origin of 94-95
Christianity 94
Climate, effect of 61, 91, 102
Clothes, evolution of 30, 61, 91
Coats of mail 67
Courtesans 69

Dacca, gauze from 104
Dancers
    jewellery of 7
    skirts of 93
Diversity of dress 60, 91
Dravidians 26
Dye colours 69

Ears, elongated 68
Enamelling 65
Etruscan jewellery 8

Fa-Hien 89
Felting of cloth 11
Finger rings, first use of 33
Flowers, uses of 66, 96, 99
Flywhisks 26
Footwear 5
Forehead ornaments, absence of 66

Gandhara 59, 62
Graeco-Roman influence 60, 66
Greek dress 60

Hair, short 96
Hairdressers 95
Harsha 90
Henna, use of 96
Hinduism 8

Ikshvaku dynasty 25
Inlay work 65
Ivory, use of 66

Jainism 8, 94
Jains, female clothing 93, 103

Kanishka 60
Kautilya 7

Khorez 67
Kumbipatta sect 9

Lambadis 93
Leather tunics 61
Licchavi tribe 122
Lips, darkened 96

Mahavira 10
Mara 66
Marwar, anklets of 33
Mathura 60, 69
Metal plates on garments 61, 70

Necklines 27
Nudity, female, semi 62, 94

Parthian influence 60, 61
Peacock feathers 27
Persian
    dress 8
    influence 62, 63, 91, 95
Phrygian women 6, 63
Protective symbols 64

Rainproof cloth 11
Roman influence 62

Sacred thread 30
Saddles, lack of 67
Sanchi 69
Sari, origin of 62
Shirt, origin of 30
Silk
    route 68, 69
    use of 68
Skirt, evolution of 62, 63, 93
Sogdiania 67
Stitched garments 8, 60, 61, 90
Stones for jewellery 65

Taxila 8
Trade with
    Babylon 3
    Badakshan 69
    China 3, 36, 68
    Persia 3, 36
    Rome 25, 36, 60, 68
Trousers, for women 63
Turanian Tartars 95, 117, 123
Turban
    first use of 6
    for women 96
    obsolescence of 91

Laser typeset at Sundstrand Business Machines, K-2A Hauz Khas Enclave, New Delhi-110 016 and printed at Kapoor Art Press, A38/3 Mayapuri Industrial Area, Phase-I, New Delhi-110 064.

This book is an abridged edition of *Ancient Indian Costume* by the same author. It traces the evolution of costume in ancient India between 321 B.C. and A.D. 850, largely on the basis of archaeological sources. Each of the four chapters includes a brief social history of the specific period, its costumes, headgears and hairstyles, jewellery, textiles and dyes, and a short note on the visual art of the period. Supplemented with 79 illustrations, this edition is intended as a primer to the layperson who seeks an insight into the costume of ancient India. It will also serve as handy reference to illustrators, art students, fashion designers and costume designers for film, television, and theatre. The original edition of this book has been used as a textbook in several institutions, including East-West University, Honolulu.

Roshen Alkazi has managed various contemporary art galleries for the past 30 years, and is at present Director of her own art gallery, Art Heritage, New Delhi. She has been a costume designer for over 40 years, both in Bombay and Delhi with the Theatre Group, Theatre Unit, National School of Drama, and is currently involved with Living Theatre in this capacity. She has taught history of costume at the New Delhi Polytechnic for several years. She also writes poetry. Writers' Workshop, Calcutta, have published two volumes of her verse, *Seventeen Poems* and *Seventeen More Poems*. Her book *Medieval Costume in India*, Vols I and II, is due to be published shortly.

[redacted]

एकम् सूते सकलम्

NATIONAL BOOK TRUST, INDIA